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## HISTORY OF CHARLES XII.

### BOOK I.

History of Sweden—Charles' Education—His Enemies—  
Peter the Great—Anecdotes about Peter and the Rus-  
sian Nation—United attack of Muscovy, Poland, and  
Denmark against Charles.

SWEDEN and FINLAND form a kingdom one third part greater in extent than France, but very inferior to it in fertility and population. The country extends nearly from the fifty-fifth to the seventieth degree of north latitude, being in length three, and in breadth two, hundred French leagues (nine hundred by six hundred miles), and it is subject to a severe climate, hardly enjoying either spring or autumn. Winter prevails nine months of the year; and the heat of summer immediately succeeds the excessive cold of winter. It begins to freeze in the month of October, and there are none of those insensible gradations of temperature which in other countries accompany the seasons, and render the variation the more pleasing. Nature, as a compensation, however, has given to this severe climate a serene sky and a pure air. The almost

continual heat of the summer's sun produces flowers and fruits in a short time. The tediousness of the long winter nights is alleviated by the morning and evening twilights, which last in proportion as the sun is more or less distant. At the same time the brightness of the moon, which is not obscured by clouds, but increased by the reflection of the snow-covered ground, and frequently by the northern lights, renders it as convenient to travel in Sweden by night as by day. The cattle are smaller than in the more southern parts of Europe, owing to the want of pasturage. The men are larger; the serenity of the sky conduces to their health, as the rigor of the climate does to their strength. They live even to a greater age than other men, when not debilitated by the immoderate use of wine and strong liquors, which the northern nations seem to be the more immoderately fond of in proportion as they are denied to them by nature.

The Swedes are well made, robust, active, and capable of sustaining the greatest fatigue, hunger, and penury. Born to a military life, full of pride, more brave than industrious, they have long neglected, and even to this day but badly cultivate, the arts of commerce, which only can supply them with what is wanting to their country. It is said to be principally from Sweden, of which one part is still named Gothland, that those multitudes of Goths issued forth, who, like an inundation, overwhelmed Europe, and rent it from the Roman empire, which had for five hundred years been its usurper, its legislator, and its tyrant.

The northern countries were at that time much more populous than at present; not only from their religion affording the inhabitants an opportunity of furnishing the state with a greater number of subjects, by the possession of a plurality of wives, but because the women themselves were as laborious and robust as the men.

Sweden preserved its liberty till the middle of the fourteenth century; for though during so long a period there happened more than one revolution in government, such revolutions turned out constantly in favor of freedom. To its chief magistrate was given the name of King, a title that in different countries has very different degrees of power annexed to it. In France and Spain it signifies an absolute monarch; in Poland, Sweden, and England, the head of the commonwealth. The King of Sweden could do nothing without the senate; and the senate depended upon the states-general, which were often convened. The representatives of the nation in these numerous assemblies were the gentlemen, bishops, and deputies of the towns; and, in process of time, the peasantry, a class of people unjustly slighted in other nations, and enslaved in almost all the countries of the north.

About the year 1492, this nation, though jealous of its liberty, and boasting even to this day of having conquered Rome thirteen centuries ago, was reduced to slavery by a woman, and a people less powerful than themselves.

Margaret Waldemar, the Semiramis of the North, Queen of Denmark and Norway, joining address to

force, conquered Sweden, and formed these three great states into one kingdom. After her decease, the country was distracted by civil wars; throwing off and submitting again to the Danish yoke, under the alternate administration of kings and popular protectors. Two of these tyrants oppressed them horribly about the year 1520; the one, Christiern II., King of Denmark, a monster in vice, without one compensating virtue; the other an archbishop of Upsal, primate of the kingdom, equally barbarous with King Christiern. These two, in concert, caused the consuls and magistrates of Stockholm, together with ninety-four senators, to be seized in one day and massacred by the common executioners, under the pretext that they were excommunicated by the Pope for having defended the rights of the state against the archbishop. After this they gave up Stockholm to be pillaged, and the whole town was put to the sword, without distinction of age or sex.

While these men, agreeing as to the means of oppression, and differing only in dividing the spoil, were committing acts of the greatest cruelty, and exercising the most tyrannical despotism, a singular and novel event gave a turn to the affairs of the north.

Gustavus Vasa, a youth descended from the ancient kings of Sweden, issued forth from amidst the forests of Dalecarlia, where he had lain concealed, in order to deliver his country from slavery. He had one of those great souls which Nature so seldom forms, possessed of all the qualities neces-



sary to govern mankind. The advantages of a fine person and a noble mien prepossessed every one in his favor, so that he gained partisans wherever he appeared. His eloquence, to which his engaging deportment gave peculiar force, was the more persuasive as it was artless and simple. His enterprising genius formed those projects which to the vulgar appear rash, but are imputed to a noble daring by great minds; and these his courage and perseverance enabled him to accomplish. Intrepid yet prudent, and of a gentle disposition in a ferocious age, he was, in short, as virtuous as the head of a party can possibly be.

Gustavus had been the hostage of Christiern, and had been detained a prisoner contrary to the law of nations. Having escaped from prison, he disguised himself in the habit of a peasant, and wandered about in the mountains and woods of Dalecarlia, where he was reduced to the necessity of working in the copper mines for subsistence and concealment. Buried as he was in these subterraneous caverns, he had the courage to form the design of dethroning the tyrant. To this end he discovered himself to the peasants, who looked upon him as one of that superior order of beings to which common men owe a natural submission. These servile savages he soon converted into soldiers. He attacked Christiern and the archbishop, repeatedly defeated them, banished them from Sweden, and at last was deservedly chosen by the states king of that country of which he had been a deliverer.

He was scarcely established on the throne when

he undertook an enterprise still more difficult than conquest. The real tyrants of the state were the bishops, who having engrossed almost all the wealth of the kingdom, made use of it to oppress the subjects, and make war upon the king. Their power was the more formidable, as popular ignorance held it to be sacred. On the Catholic religion, therefore, Gustavus revenged the criminality of its ministers ; so that in less than two years Lutheranism was introduced into Sweden ; and that rather by the arts of policy than by the influence of authority. Having thus conquered the kingdom, as he used to express it, from the Danes and the clergy, he reigned a successful and absolute monarch to the age of seventy, when he died full of glory, leaving his family and religion in peaceable possession of the throne.

Gustavus Adolphus was one of his descendants, commonly called the Great Gustavus. This prince made a conquest of Ingria, Livonia, Bremen, Verdun, Wismar and Pomerania, besides above a hundred places in Germany, which, after his death, were yielded up by the Swedes. He shook the throne of Ferdinand II. and protected the Lutherans in Germany, in which he was secretly assisted by the See of Rome, who dreaded the power of the emperor much more than that of heresy. It was this Gustavus who, by his victories, contributed in fact to humble the house of Austria ; although the glory of that enterprise is usually ascribed entirely to Cardinal de Richelieu, who well knew how to procure himself the reputation of those great actions which

Gustavus was content with performing. He was on the point of extending the war beyond the Danube, and perhaps of dethroning the emperor, when he was killed, in the thirty-seventh year of his age, at the battle of Lutzen, which he gained over Wallenstein, carrying with him to his grave the name of Great, lamented by the people of the north, and respected even by his enemies.

His daughter Christina, a woman of uncommon genius, was much fonder of conversing with men of letters than of reigning over a people whose knowledge was confined to the art of war. She rendered herself as famous for resigning a throne as her ancestors had been for obtaining or establishing it. The Protestants have aspersed her character, as if it were impossible for a person to be possessed of great virtues without adhering to Luther; while the Papists have triumphed too much on the pretended conversion of a woman who was no more than a philosopher. She retired to Rome, where she passed the remainder of her days in the midst of the arts she was fond of, and for which she had renounced a kingdom at twenty-seven years of age.

Before her abdication she prevailed on the states of Sweden to elect her cousin, Charles Gustavus X., son to the Count Palatine, and Duke of Deux-Points, to succeed to the crown. This prince added new conquests to those of Gustavus Adolphus; carrying immediately his arms into Poland, where he gained the famous battle of Warsaw, which lasted three days. He waged a long and successful war with the Danes; besieged their capital;

reunited Schonen to Sweden; and confirmed, at least for a time, the Duke of Holstein in the possession of Schleswick. Experiencing afterwards a reverse of fortune, he concluded a peace with his enemies, and turned his ambition against his subjects. Thus he formed the design of establishing a despotic government in Sweden, but died, like Gustavus the Great, in the thirty-seventh year of his age, before he had been able to complete that system of despotism which was brought to perfection by his son Charles XI.

Charles XI., a warrior like his ancestors, was more despotic than any of them. He abolished the authority of the senate, which was declared the senate of the king, and not of the kingdom. He was frugal, vigilant, indefatigable; which would have made him beloved by his subjects, had not his despotic spirit converted their love into fear.

In 1680 he married Ulrica Eleonora, daughter to Frederick III., King of Denmark, a princess of great virtue, and worthy of greater confidence than her husband reposed in her. Of this marriage, on the 27th of June, 1682, was born King Charles XII., the most extraordinary man, perhaps, that ever appeared in the world. In him were united all the great qualities of his ancestors; nor had he any other fault or misfortune but that he carried all these virtues to excess. It is this prince of whom we propose to write whatever we have learnt with certainty relating either to his person or his actions.

The first book he was set to read was the work

of Samuel Puffendorff, in order to give him an early knowledge of his own and the neighboring states. The first foreign language taught him was the German, which he continued ever after to speak with the same fluency as his mother-tongue. At seven years of age he was a proficient in horsemanship; when the violent exercises in which he delighted, and which discovered his martial turn, soon gave him a vigorous constitution, capable to support the fatigues to which his natural inclination prompted him.

Though gentle in his infancy, he betrayed an inflexible obstinacy. The only way to bend him, was to awaken his sense of honor; with the name of Glory everything could be obtained from him. He had an aversion to Latin; but as soon as he heard that the kings of Poland and Denmark understood it, he learned it presently, and retained so much of it as to be able to speak it all the rest of his life. The same means were employed to induce him to learn French; but he persisted, as long as he lived, in the disuse of that tongue, which he would not speak even to the French ambassadors themselves, though they understood no other.

As soon as he had acquired a little knowledge of Latin, his teacher made him translate Quintus Curtius, a book to which he was attached more on account of the subject than the style. On being asked one day what he thought of Alexander: "I think," said the prince, "I could wish to resemble him." "But," said the preceptor, "he lived only thirty-two years." "And is not that long enough,"

replied Charles, "for one who has conquered kingdoms?" The courtiers did not fail to report these answers to the king, his father, who exclaimed, "This boy will surpass his father, and even Gustavus the Great!" A story is told of how he amused himself one day in viewing two plans (one of a town in Hungary, which the Turks had taken from the Emperor; the other of Riga, capital of Livonia, a province conquered by the Swedes about a century before), under the former of which was written this quotation from the book of Job: "The Lord hath given it me, and the Lord hath taken it from me; blessed be the name of the Lord." The young prince having read this inscription, immediately took a pencil, and wrote under the plan of Riga, "The Lord hath given it to me, and the devil shall not take it from me." This is an example of how frequently, in the most indifferent acts of his childhood, there were exhibited characteristic traces of that unconquerable spirit and uncommon genius which he one day was destined to prove to the world.

He was eleven years of age when he lost his mother, who died on the 5th of August, 1693, of a disease, as was supposed, caused by the bad usage she had received from her husband, and by her endeavors to conceal her chagrin. Charles XI. had, by means of a certain court of justice called the Chamber of Liquidations, erected by his sole authority, deprived a great number of his subjects of their wealth. Crowds of citizens ruined by this chamber—nobility, merchants, farmers, widows, and

orphans—filled the streets of Stockholm, and daily repaired to the gate of the palace, to vent their unavailing complaints. The queen relieved these unhappy people as much as lay in her power; she gave them her money, jewels, furniture, and even her clothes; and when she had no more to give them, she threw herself in tears at her husband's feet, beseeching him to have pity on his subjects. The king gravely answered her, "Madam, we took you for the sake of the children, not to give us advice," and from that time he is said to have treated her with a severity which shortened her days.

He died four years after her, on the 15th of April, 1697, in the forty-second year of his age, and the thirty-seventh of his reign, at a time when the Empire, Spain and Holland, on the one side, and France on the other, had referred the decision of their quarrels to his arbitration, and when he had already begun the work of pacification between these powers.

He left his son, who was then fifteen years of age, a throne well established at home, and respected abroad; subjects poor indeed, but warlike and loyal; with finances in good order, and under the management of able ministers.

Charles XII., on his accession to the throne, found himself not only the absolute and undisturbed master of Sweden and Finland, but also of Livonia, Carelia, Ingria, Wismar, Wibourg, the islands of Rugen and Oesel, and the finest part of Pomerania, together with the duchy of Bremen and



Verdun, all of them the conquests of his ancestors, secured to the crown by long possession, and by the solemn treaties of Munster and Oliva, and supported by the terror of the Swedish arms. The peace of Ryswick, began under the auspices of his father, being concluded under those of the son, he found himself the mediator of Europe at the commencement of his reign.

The laws of Sweden fix the majority of their kings at the age of fifteen; but Charles XI., who was entirely absolute, deferred, by his last will, the majority of his son to the age of eighteen. In this he favored the ambitious views of his mother, Edwiga-Eleonora of Holstein, dowager of Charles X., who was appointed by the king, her son, tutor-ess to the young king, her grandson, and regent of the kingdom, in conjunction with a council of five persons.

The regent had shared in the management of public affairs during the reign of her son. She was now advanced in years; but her ambition, which was greater than her genius, prompted her to entertain hopes of possessing authority for a long time under the king, her grandson. She kept him at as great a distance as possible from affairs of state. The young prince passed his time either in hunting or in reviewing his troops, and would even sometimes exercise with them; which amusement seemed only to be the natural effect of his youthful vivacity. He never betrayed any dissatisfaction sufficient to alarm the regent, who flattered herself that the dissipation of mind occasioned by



## OVERTHROW OF THE REGENCY

These diversions would render him incapable of application, and leave her the longer in possession of the regal power.

One day, in the month of November, in the same year his father died, after having reviewed several regiments, as Piper, the counsellor of state, was standing by him, he seemed to be absorbed in a profound reverie. "May I take the liberty," said Piper to him, "of asking your Majesty what you are thinking of so seriously?" "I am thinking," replied the prince, "that I am worthy to command these brave fellows; and I don't like that either they or I should any longer receive orders from a woman." Piper immediately seized this opportunity of making his fortune; but, conscious that his own interest was not sufficient for the execution of such a dangerous enterprise as the removal of the queen from the regency, and the hastening of the king's majority, he proposed the affair to Count Axel Sparre, a man of an ardent mind, and who sought to advance his own interests. On being flattered with the confidence of the king, Sparre entered into his measures, and undertook the management of the whole business, while he was working only to promote the interest of Piper. The counsellors of the regency were soon brought over to the scheme, and precipitated its execution, in order to recommend themselves the more effectually to the king.

They went in a body to propose it to the queen, who by no means expected such a declaration. The states-general were then assembled; the coun-

sellors of the regency proposed the affair; there was not a dissenting voice; the point was carried with a rapidity that nothing could withstand; so that Charles XII. had only to signify his desire of reigning, and in three days the states bestowed the government upon him. The power and credit of the queen sank in an instant; she led afterwards a life of retirement, more suitable to her age, though less agreeable to her temper. The king was crowned on the 24th of December following, on which day he made his entry into Stockholm, on a sorrel horse shod with silver, having a sceptre in his hand, and a crown upon his head, amidst the acclamations of a whole people, fond of novelty, and conceiving always great hopes from a young prince.

The ceremony of the consecration and coronation belongs to the archbishop of Upsal, and is almost the only privilege that remains to him of the great number enjoyed by his predecessors. After having anointed the prince, according to custom, he held the crown in his hand, in order to put it upon his head, when Charles snatched it from him, and crowned himself, regarding the poor prelate all the while with a stern look. The multitude, who are always dazzled by everything that has an air of grandeur, applauded this action of the king. Even those who had groaned most severely under the tyranny of the father suffered themselves to applaud this arrogance in the son, which was a presage of their slavery.

Charles was no sooner master of the kingdom

than he made Piper his chief confidant, entrusting him at the same time with the management of public affairs, making him prime minister, though without the name. A few days after he created him a count, which is a dignity of great eminence in Sweden, and not an empty title as in France.

The beginning of the king's reign gave no very favorable idea of his character; so that it was considered he had been more impatient to reign than worthy of it. He cherished, indeed, no dangerous passion; but his conduct displayed nothing but the violences of youth and obstinacy. He seemed to be equally haughty and indolent. The ambassadors who resided at his court took him even for a man of mean capacity, and represented him as such to their respective masters.\* The Swedes entertained the same opinion of him. Nobody knew his real character. He did not even know it himself, until the storm that suddenly arose in the north gave him an opportunity for the exercise of his latent talents.

Three powerful princes, taking advantage of his youth, conspired, almost at the same time, to effect his ruin. The first was Frederick IV., King of Denmark, his cousin. The second was Augustus, Elector of Saxony and King of Poland. The third, and most dangerous, was Peter the Great, Czar of Muscovy. It is necessary to unfold the origin of these wars, which produced such great events.

To begin with Denmark.—Of the two sisters of Charles XII., the eldest was married to the Duke of Holstein, a young prince of an undaunted spirit

\* The original Letters confirm this.

and gentle disposition. The Duke, oppressed by the King of Denmark, repaired to Stockholm with his spouse, and throwing himself into the arms of the king, earnestly implored his assistance, not only because he was his brother-in-law, but as he was likewise the king of a people who bore an irreconcilable hatred to the Danes.

The ancient House of Holstein, dissolved into that of Oldenburg, had been advanced by election to the throne of Denmark in 1449. All the kingdoms of the north were at that time elective, though the kingdom of Denmark soon after became hereditary. One of its kings, called Christiern III., had such an affection for his brother Adolphus, or at least such a regard for his interest, as is rarely met with among princes. He was unwilling to see him destitute of sovereign power, and yet he could not dismember his own dominions. He therefore divided with him the duchies of Holstein-Gottorp and Schleswick, by a whimsical kind of agreement, which was, that the descendants of Adolphus should ever after govern Holstein in conjunction with the Kings of Denmark; that those two duchies should belong to both in common; and that the King of Denmark should be able to do nothing in Holstein without the duke, nor the duke without the king. So strange a union, of which, however, there was afterwards a similar instance in the same family, became for the space of nearly eighty years the source of perpetual disputes between the crown of Denmark and the house of Holstein-Gottorp; the kings always endeavor-

ing to oppress the dukes, and the dukes to render themselves independent of the kings. A struggle of this nature had cost the last duke his liberty and sovereignty, both of which, however, he recovered at the conferences of Altena, in 1689, by the interposition of Sweden, England, and Holland, who became guarantees for the execution of the treaty. But as a treaty between princes is frequently no more than a submission to necessity, till the stronger shall be able to crush the weaker, the contest was revived with greater virulence than ever between the new King of Denmark and the young duke, during whose absence at Stockholm the Danes had committed some acts of hostility in the country of Holstein, and had entered into a secret agreement with the King of Poland to crush the King of Sweden himself.

Frederick Augustus, Elector of Saxony—whom neither the eloquence nor intrigues of the Abbé de Polignac, nor the great qualities of the Prince of Conti, his competitor for the throne, had been able to prevent from being chosen King of Poland about two years before—was a prince no less remarkable for his incredible strength of body, than for his bravery and gallantry of mind. His court was, next to that of Louis XIV., the most splendid of any in Europe. No prince was ever more generous or munificent, or bestowed his favors with a better grace. He had purchased the votes of one half of the Polish nobility, and overawed the other by the approach of a Saxon army. Thinking he should have occasion for his troops, in order to establish

himself the more firmly on the throne, he wanted a pretext for retaining them in Poland; he therefore resolved to employ them in attacking the King of Sweden, which he did on the following occasion.

Livonia, the most beautiful and the most fertile province of the north, belonged formerly to the Knights of the Teutonic Order. The Russians, the Poles, and the Swedes, had disputed its possession. The Swedes had secured it about a hundred years before; and it had been solemnly ceded to them by the peace of Oliva.

The late King, Charles XI., amidst his severities to his subjects in general, had not spared the Livonians. He had stripped them of their privileges, and of part of their patrimonies. Patkul, unhappily so famous afterwards for his tragical death, was deputed by the nobility of Livonia to carry to the throne the complaints of the province. He addressed his master in a speech, respectful indeed, but bold, and full of that manly eloquence which calamity inspires when accompanied by courage. But kings too frequently consider these public addresses as no more than vain ceremonies, which it is customary to suffer, without paying them any regard. Charles XI. accordingly, who could play the hypocrite extremely well when he was not carried away by the violence of his passion, gently struck Patkul on the shoulder, and said: "You have spoken for your country like a brave man, and I esteem you for it; go on." Notwithstanding this fair speech, he caused him, in a few days after, to be declared guilty of high treason, and condemned

to death as a traitor. Patkul, who had secreted himself, made his escape, and carried his resentment with him to Poland; where he was afterwards admitted into the presence of King Augustus. Charles XI. was now dead; but Patkul's sentence was still in force, and his indignation still unabated. He represented to the Polish monarch the facility of conquering Livonia, whose people were provoked to despair, and ready to throw off the Swedish yoke; at the same time that their king was a child, and incapable of making any defense. These representations were well received by a prince already desirous of making so great a conquest. Augustus had engaged at his coronation to exert his utmost efforts to recover the provinces which Poland had lost; and he imagined that by making an incursion into Livonia he should at once please the people and establish his own power. In both of these attempts, however plausible, he found himself in the end disappointed. Everything was soon got ready for a sudden invasion, without even condescending to have recourse to the vain formalities of declarations of war and manifestoes. The storm thickened at the same time on the side of Muscovy. The monarch who governed that empire deserves the attention of posterity.

Peter Alexiowitz, Czar of Russia, had already made himself formidable by the battle he had gained over the Turks in 1697, and by the reduction of Asoph, which opened to him the dominion of the Black Sea. But it was by actions still more glorious than his victories that he aspired to the



name of Great. Muscovy, or Russia, comprehends the northern parts of Asia and of Europe, extending from the frontiers of China for the space of fifteen hundred leagues, to the borders of Poland and Sweden. This immense country, however, was hardly known to Europe before the time of Czar Peter. The Muscovites were less civilized than the Mexicans when discovered by Cortes; born the slaves of masters as barbarous as themselves, they remained in a state of ignorance, in want of all the arts, and in such an insensibility of that want, as suppressed every motive to industry. An ancient law, which they held as sacred, forbade them, under pain of death, to leave their native country without permission of their Patriarch. This law, enacted with a view to preclude them from all opportunities of becoming sensible of their slavery, was yet acceptable to a people who, in the depth of their ignorance and misery, disdained all commerce with foreign nations.

The era of the Muscovites dates from the creation of the world; since which time they conceive 7207 years to have elapsed at the beginning of the last century, without being able to assign any reason for this computation. The first day of their year answered to the 13th of September, new style. The reason alleged for this regulation is, that it is most probable God created the world in autumn, the season when the fruits of the earth are in their full maturity. Thus, the only appearance of knowledge which they had was founded in gross error; not one of them ever dreamed that the autumn of



Muscovy might possibly be the spring of another country, situated in an opposite climate. It was not long since the people of Moscow thought of burning the secretary of a Persian ambassador who had foretold an eclipse of the sun. They did not so much as know the use of figures ; but in all their accounts made use of little beads strung upon brass wires. They had no other manner of reckoning in the offices of revenue, not even in the treasury of the Czar.

Their religion was, and still is, that of the Greek Christians, but mixed with many superstitious rites, to which they were the more strongly attached, in proportion as they were the more extravagant, and their burthen the more intolerable. Few Muscovites would dare to eat a pigeon, because the Holy Ghost is painted in the form of a dove. They regularly observed four Lents in the year ; during which time of abstinence they never presumed to eat either eggs or milk. God and St. Nicholas were the objects of their worship, and next to them the Czar and the Patriarch. The authority of the last was as unbounded as the ignorance of the people. He pronounced sentence of death, and inflicted the most cruel punishments, without any possibility of an appeal from his tribunal. He made a solemn procession twice a year on horseback, attended by all his clergy. The Czar, on foot, held the bridle of his horse, and the people prostrated themselves before him in the streets, as the Tartars do before their Grand Lama. Confession was in use among them, but it was only in cases of the

greatest crimes. In these absolution was necessary, but not repentance. They thought themselves pure in the sight of God as soon as they received the benediction of their Papas. Thus they passed, without remorse, from confession to theft and murder; and what among other Christians is a restraint from vice, with them was an encouragement to wickedness. They would not even venture to drink milk on a fast; although, on a festival, masters of families, priests, married women, and maidens, would make no scruple to intoxicate themselves with brandy. There were religious disputes, however, among them, as well as in other countries; but their greatest controversy was, whether laymen should make the sign of the cross with two fingers or with three. One Jacob Nursoff, in the preceding reign, had raised a sedition in Astracan, on the subject of this dispute. There were even some fanatics among them, as there are in those civilized nations where every one is a theologian; and Peter, who always carried justice into cruelty, caused some of these unhappy wretches, called Vosko-jesuits, to be committed to the flames.

The Czar, in his extensive empire, had many other subjects who were not Christians. The Tartars, inhabiting the western coasts of the Caspian Sea and the Palus Mæotis, were Mahometans; the Siberians, the Ostiacks, and the Samoiedes, who lie towards the Polar Sea, were savages, some of whom were idolaters, and others had not even the knowledge of a God; and yet the Swedes, who were sent prisoners among them, were better

pleased with their manners than with those of the ancient Muscovites.

Peter Alexiowitz had received an education that tended still more to increase the barbarism of this part of the world. His natural disposition led him to caress strangers before he knew what advantages he might derive from their acquaintance. A young Genevese, named Le Fort, of an ancient family in Geneva, the son of a druggist, was the first instrument he employed, in the course of time, to change the face of affairs in Muscovy. This young man, sent by his father to be a merchant at Copenhagen, quitted his business, and followed an ambassador of Denmark to Muscovy, from that restlessness of mind which is always experienced by such as feel themselves superior to their situation. He took it into his head to learn the Russian language. The rapid progress which he made in it excited the curiosity of the Czar, who was yet in his youth. Le Fort became acquainted with him; he insinuated himself into his familiarity; he often talked to him of the advantages of commerce and navigation; he told him how Holland, which had never possessed the hundredth part of the states of Muscovy, made as great a figure by means of her commerce alone, as Spain, of which she had formerly been a small province, both useless and despised. He entertained him with the refined policy of the princes of Europe, with the discipline of their troops, the police of their cities, and the infinite number of manufactures, arts, and sciences, which render the Europeans powerful and happy. These

discourses awakened the young emperor as from a profound lethargy. His mighty genius, which a barbarous education had repressed, but had not been able to destroy, unfolded itself almost at once. He resolved to be a man, to rule over men, and to create a new nation. Many princes before him had renounced their crowns from disgust at the weight of business, but none, like him, had ceased to be a king in order to learn how to govern better. This is what was done by Peter the Great.

He left Muscovy in 1698, having reigned but two years, and went to Holland, disguised under a common name, as if he had been a domestic servant of the same Mr. Le Fort, whom he sent in the position of ambassador extraordinary to the States General. As soon as he arrived at Amsterdam he enrolled himself among the shipwrights of the India Company's wharf, under the name of Peter Michaeloff, but he was commonly called Peter Bas, or Master Peter. He worked in the yard like the other mechanics. At his leisure hours he learned such parts of the mathematics as are useful to a prince—fortification, navigation, and the art of drawing plans. He went into the workmen's shops, and examined all their manufactures, and nothing could escape his observation. From thence he went over to England, where, having perfected himself in the art of shipbuilding, he returned to Holland, carefully observing everything that might turn to the advantage of his own country. At length, after two years of travel and labor, to which no man but himself would have willingly

submitted, he again made his appearance in Muscovy, with all the arts of Europe in his train. Artists of every kind followed him in crowds. Then were seen for the first time large Russian ships in the Baltic, and on the Black Sea, and the ocean. Stately buildings, of regular architecture, were raised among the Russian huts. He founded colleges, academies, printing-houses, and libraries. The cities were brought under a regular police. The clothes and customs of the people were gradually changed, though not without some difficulty; and the Muscovites learned by degrees the true nature of a social state. Even their superstitious rites were abolished; the dignity of the Patriarch was suppressed; and the Czar declared himself the head of the church. This last enterprise, which would have cost a prince less absolute than Peter both his throne and his life, succeeded almost without opposition, and insured to him the success of his other innovations.

After having humbled an ignorant and a barbarous clergy, he ventured to make a trial of instructing them, though by that means he ran the risk of rendering them formidable; but he was too sensible of his own power to entertain any fear. He caused philosophy and theology to be taught in the few monasteries that still remained. True it is, this theology still savors of that barbarous period in which Peter civilized his people. A person of undoubted veracity assured me that he was present at a public disputation where the point of controversy was, whether the practice of smoking

tobacco was a sin. The respondent maintained that it was lawful to get drunk with brandy, but not to smoke, because the holy Scriptures say, "that which proceedeth out of the mouth defileth a man, and that which entereth into it doth not defile him."

The monks were not pleased with this reformation. The Czar had hardly erected printing-houses when they made use of them to attack him. They declared in print that Peter was Antichrist, because he deprived the living of their beards, and allowed the dead to be dissected in his academy. But another monk, who aimed at promotion, refuted this book, and proved that Peter could not be Antichrist, because the number 666 was not to be found in his name. The libeller was accordingly broken upon the wheel, and the author of the refutation made bishop of Rezan.

This reformer of Muscovy is remarkable for having enacted a very salutary law, the want of which reflects disgrace on many civilized nations. This was that no man engaged in the service of the state, no citizen established in trade, and especially no minor, should retire into a convent.

Peter knew of what infinite consequence it was to prevent useful subjects from consecrating themselves to idleness, and to hinder young people from disposing of their liberty at an age when they were incapable of disposing of the least part of their patrimony. But this law, though calculated for the general interest of mankind, is daily eluded by the industry of the monks; as if they were, in fact,

gainers by peopling their convents at the expense of their country.

The Czar not only subjected the church to the state, after the example of the Turkish emperors, but, by a more masterly stroke of policy, dissolved a militia similar to that of the janizaries; and accomplished in a short time what the sultans had long in vain attempted. He disbanded the Russian janizaries, called strelitz, and who kept the Czars in subjection. This body of soldiery, more formidable to their masters than to their neighbors, consisted of about thirty thousand foot, one half of whom remained at Moscow, while the other half were stationed upon the frontiers. The pay of a strelitz was no more than four roubles a year; but the deficiency of this amount was amply compensated by privileges and extortions. Peter formed at first a company of foreigners, among whom he enrolled his own name, and did not think it beneath his dignity to begin the service in the capacity of a drummer, and to perform the duties of that mean office; so much did the nation stand in need of examples! By degrees he became an officer. He gradually raised new regiments; and at last, finding himself master of a well-disciplined army, he broke the strelitz, who durst not disobey him.

The cavalry were nearly the same with that of Poland, or what the French formerly was, when the kingdom of France was no more than an assemblage of fiefs. The gentlemen were mounted at their own expense, and fought without discipline, and sometimes with no other arms than a sabre or

a bow. They were thus as incapable of command as of conquest.

Peter the Great taught them to obey, both by the example he set and the punishment he inflicted; for he served in the quality of a soldier and subaltern officer. He thus severely punished the Boyards, an order of gentlemen who pretended that it was their privilege to serve only at their own convenience. He established a regular corps of artillery, and converted five hundred church bells into cannon. In the year 1714 he had thirteen thousand pieces of ordnance. He likewise formed companies of dragoons, a description of troops very suitable to the Muscovites, as the size of their horses was small. In 1738 the Russians had thirty regiments of these dragoons, of a thousand men each, well disciplined and accoutred, besides regiments of hussars. He likewise established a school for engineers, in a country where, before himself, no one understood the elements of geometry.. He was himself a good engineer; but he excelled chiefly in his knowledge of naval affairs; he was an able sea-captain, a skilful pilot, a good sailor, an expert shipwright, and his knowledge of these arts was the more meritorious, as he was born with a great dread of the water.

In his youth he could not pass over a bridge without trembling: on all these occasions he caused the wooden windows of his coach to be shut; but of this constitutional weakness he soon got the better by his courage and resolution. He caused a beautiful harbor to be built at the mouth of



the Tanais, near Asoph, in which he proposed to keep a number of galleys; and some time after, thinking that these vessels, so long, light, and flat, would probably succeed in the Baltic, he had upwards of three hundred of them built at his favorite city of Petersburg. He showed his subjects the method of building ships of wood, and taught them the art of navigation. He had even learned surgery, and, in case of necessity, was known to tap a person for the dropsy. He was well versed in mechanics, and instructed the workmen.

The revenue of the Czar, when compared with the immense extent of his dominions, was indeed inconsiderable. It never amounted to four-and-twenty millions of livres, reckoning the mark at about fifty livres. But *he* may always be accounted rich, who has it in his power to accomplish great undertakings. It is not the scarcity of money that debilitates a state, it is the want of men, and especially men of abilities.

Russia, notwithstanding the natural strength of the inhabitants, is not very populous. Peter himself, in civilizing his dominions, unhappily contributed to the decrease of his people. Frequent levies in his long and unsuccessful wars; nations destroyed by fatigue, or cut off by diseases while being transplanted from the coasts of the Caspian Sea to those of the Baltic; three-fourths of the Muscovite children dying of the small-pox, which is more dangerous in those climates than in any other; in a word, the melancholy effects of a long duration of uncivilized government, barbarous even in its police—

these are the causes that in this country, comprehending so great a part of the continent, there are still vast deserts. Russia is supposed to contain five hundred thousand families of gentlemen; two hundred thousand lawyers; something more than five millions of citizens and peasants, who pay a sort of land tax; six hundred thousand men in the provinces conquered from the Swedes. The Cossacks in the Ukraine, and the Tartars that are subject to Muscovy, do not exceed two millions; in fine, it appears that in this immense country there are not above fourteen millions of people, that is a little more than two-thirds of the inhabitants of France.\*

While the Czar was thus employed in changing the laws, the manners, the militia, and the very face of his country, he likewise resolved to increase his greatness by encouraging commerce, which at once constitutes the riches of a particular state, and contributes to the interest of the world in general. He undertook to make Russia the center of trade between Asia and Europe. He determined to join the Duna, the Volga, and the Tanais, by canals, of which he drew the plans; and thus to open a new passage from the Baltic to the Euxine and Caspian seas, and from those seas to the Northern Ocean. The port of Archangel, frozen up nine months in

\* This was written in the year 1727. The population of Russia has greatly increased since that time, as well by military conquest as by the arts of civil policy, and the care which has been taken to induce foreigners to settle in the country.

the year, and which could not be entered without making a long and dangerous circuit, did not appear to him sufficiently commodious. So long back, therefore, as the year 1700, he had formed a design of opening a sea-port on the Baltic that should become the magazine of the north, and of building a city that should prove the capital of his empire.

He had even then attempted the discovery of a north-east passage to China; and the manufactures of Pekin and Paris were intended to embellish his new city.

A road, 754 versts \* long (about 500 miles), running through marshes that were to be drained, was to lead from Moscow to his new city. Most of these projects have been executed by himself; and the two Empresses, his successors, even improved upon those of his schemes that were practicable, and abandoned only such as it was impossible to accomplish.

He always travelled through his dominions as much as his wars would permit; but he travelled like a legislator and a naturalist; examining nature everywhere; endeavoring to correct or perfect her; taking himself the soundings of seas and rivers; ordering sluices, visiting docks, causing mines to be worked, assaying metals, and directing accurate charts to be drawn, in the execution of which he himself assisted.

He built upon a desert spot the imperial city of St. Petersburg, containing at present sixty thousand

\* A verst is equal to 3500 feet, or 1166 yards (about two-thirds of an English mile).

houses, the residence of a splendid court, whose amusements are of the most refined taste. He built the harbor of Cronstadt, on the Neva, and St. Croix, on the frontiers of Persia; he erected forts in the Ukraine, and in Siberia; established offices of admiralty at Archangel, St. Petersburg, Astracan, and Asoph; founded arsenals, and built and endowed hospitals. All his own houses were mean, and executed in a bad taste, but he spared no expense in rendering the public buildings grand and magnificent.

The sciences, which in other countries have been the slow product of so many ages, were, by his care and industry, imported into Russia in full perfection. He established an academy on the plan of the famous societies of Paris and London. The Deliles, the Bulfingers, the Hermannuses, the Bernouilles, and the celebrated Wolf, a man who excelled in every branch of philosophy, were all invited and brought to St. Petersburg at great expense. This academy still exists; and the Muscovites, at length, have philosophers of their own nation. He obliged the young nobility to travel for improvement, and to bring back into Russia the politeness of foreign countries. I have myself seen young Russians who were men of genius and science.

It was thus that a single man reformed the greatest empire in the world. It is, however, shocking to reflect, that this reformer of mankind should have been deficient in that first of all virtues, the virtue of humanity. Brutality in his

pleasures, ferocity in his manners, and barbarity in his revenge, sullied the lustre of his many virtues. He civilized his subjects, and yet remained a barbarian. He was conscious of this, and once said to a magistrate of Amsterdam: "I reform my country, but am not able to reform myself." He has executed his sentence upon criminals with his own hands, and at a debauch at table has shown his address at cutting off heads. In Africa there are princes who thus, with their own hands, shed the blood of their subjects; but these pass for barbarians. The death of a son, whom he ought to have corrected or disinherited, would render the memory of Peter the object of universal hatred, were it not that the great and many blessings he bestowed upon his subjects were almost sufficient to excuse his cruelty to his own offspring.

Such was Czar Peter; and his great projects were little more than in embryo when he joined the Kings of Poland and Denmark against a child whom they all despised. The founder of the Russian Empire was ambitious of being a conqueror; and such he thought he might easily become by the prosecution of a war which, being so well projected, could not fail, he imagined, of proving useful to all his designs. The art of war was a new art which it was necessary to teach his people.

He wanted, beside, a port on the east side of the Baltic, to facilitate the execution of his schemes. He wanted the province of Ingria,

which lies to the north-east of Livonia. The Swedes were in possession of it, and from them he resolved to take it by force. His predecessors had claims upon Ingria, Esthonia, and Livonia, and the present seemed a favorable opportunity of reviving those claims which had been buried for a hundred years, and had been extinguished by treaties. He entered, therefore, into a league with the King of Poland, to wrest from young Charles XII. all the territories that lie between the Gulf of Finland, the Baltic Sea, Poland, and Muscovy.

## BOOK II.

**Remarkable and unexpected change in the character of Charles—At the age of eighteen he engages in a war with Denmark, Poland, and Muscovy—Finishes that with Denmark in six weeks—Defeats 80,000 Russians with only 8,000 Swedes—Marches into Poland—Description of Poland and its Government—Charles gains many battles, and becomes master of Poland, where he prepares to appoint a King.**

Thus did three powerful sovereigns threaten the infancy of Charles XII. The news of these preparations dismayed the Swedes, and alarmed the council. All their distinguished generals were dead; and they had every reason to tremble under the reign of a young king who had as yet given them but a bad opinion of his abilities. He hardly ever came to council for any other purpose than to lay his legs across the table. Absent and indifferent, he never appeared to interest himself in anything.

As the council were one day deliberating, in his presence, on the dangerous predicament in which they stood, some of them proposed to avoid the

impending tempest by negotiations; when the young prince immediately rose with the grave and assured air of a man of superior abilities, who had fixed his resolution. "Gentlemen," said he, "I am resolved never to begin an unjust war, but never to finish an unjust one but with the destruction of my enemies. My resolution is fixed. I will march and attack the first who shall declare war; and when I shall have conquered him, I hope to strike terror into the rest." All the old councillors, astonished at this declaration, looked at each other without daring to answer. In short, they were surprised at the conduct of the king, and being ashamed to appear less confident, received his orders for the war with admiration.

They were still more agreeably surprised when they beheld him renounce at once the most innocent amusements of his youth. From the first moment of his preparation for the war, he began an entire new course of life, from which he never after departed a single moment. Full of the idea of Alexander and Cæsar, he determined to imitate those two heroes in everything but their vices. He no longer indulged himself in finery, sports, and recreations, and reduced his table to the most rigid frugality. He had before loved show in dress; but he now dressed himself as a common soldier. It was generally supposed that he had formed a strong attachment to a lady of his court, but whether this supposition was true or not, it is certain that from that time he renounced all fondness for the sex, not only from the fear of being



governed by them, but to set an example to his soldiers, whom he was desirous of bringing back to the most rigid discipline; and perhaps, also, from the vanity of being deemed the only king who could subdue a passion so difficult to conquer. He likewise resolved to abstain from wine during the rest of his life. Many people have told me that he made this resolution merely to get the better of his inclinations in everything, and to give an additional lustre to his self-denial; but by far the greater part assured me that he was determined by those means to punish himself for an excess which he had been guilty of, and for an affront he had offered to a lady at table, even in the presence of the queen his mother. Even if that be true, this self-condemnation of his behavior, and the abstinence which he imposed on himself throughout life, is a species of heroism not less to be admired.

His first step was to grant assistance to his brother-in-law, the Duke of Holstein. Eight thousand men were immediately sent into Pomerania, a province bordering upon Holstein, to fortify the duke against the attacks of the Danes. And indeed the duke had need of them. His dominions were laid waste, his castle of Gottorp taken, and the city of Tonningen pressed by an obstinate siege, to which the King of Denmark had come in person, in order to enjoy a conquest which he imagined certain. This spark began to throw the empire into a flame. On the one side, the Saxon troops of the King of Poland, including those

of Brandenburg, Wolfenbottle, and Hesse-Cassel, advanced to join the Danes. On the other, the eight thousand men sent by the King of Sweden, the troops of Hanover and Zell, and three regiments of Dutch, came to assist the duke. At the time the little country of Holstein became thus the theatre of war, two squadrons, the one from England, and the other from Holland, appeared in the Baltic. These two states were guarantees of the treaty of peace of Altena, which treaty the Danes had broken through. The English and Dutch, therefore, were in earnest at this time to support the oppressed Duke of Holstein, because it was for the interest of their commerce to check the growing power of the King of Denmark. They knew that the Danish king, being once master of the passage of the Sound, would impose the most oppressive laws on the mercantile nations as soon as ever he was in a situation to do it with impunity. This mutual interest has long engaged the Dutch and English to maintain, as much as possible, the balance of power between the northern princes; they therefore joined the young King of Sweden, who appeared in danger of being crushed by the combination of so many enemies, and supported him for the same reason that the others attacked him,—because they looked upon him as incapable of defending himself.

Charles was amusing himself with hunting the bear when he received the news of the Saxons having made an irruption into Livonia. The manner in which he practiced this amusement was

as novel as dangerous. He used no other arms than forked sticks, and a small net fixed to some trees. A bear of an inconceivable size ran directly at the king, who brought him down to the ground, after a long struggle, by the aid of only his stick and net. It must be confessed that, in reflecting on such adventures, on the personal strength of King Augustus, and the travels of Czar Peter, one would be apt to think they lived in the days of Hercules and Theseus.

Charles set out on his first campaign the 8th of May, new style, in the year. 1700. When he quitted Stockholm, to which he never after returned, an innumerable crowd of people accompanied him as far as the port of Carlscreon, offering up prayers for his success, and with tears expressing their admiration. Before he left Sweden he established at Stockholm a Council of Defence, composed of several senators, whose duty it was to take care of everything that regarded the navy, army, and fortifications of the country. The body of the senate was to regulate provisionally everything in the interior part of the kingdom. Having thus established a regular mode of administration in his dominions, his mind, divested of every other care, was entirely taken up with the war. His fleet consisted of forty-three ships; that in which he himself sailed was called the "King Charles," and was the largest that had ever been seen, carrying a hundred and twenty guns. In this ship Count Piper, his first minister of state, General Renschild, and the Count de Guiscard, ambassador

from France to Sweden, embarked along with him. He joined the squadron of the allies, when the Danish fleet, declining the combat, gave the three combined fleets an opportunity of approaching Copenhagen near enough to throw into it several shells.

Certain it is that it was the king himself who then proposed to General Renschild to make a descent, and to besiege Copenhagen by land, while it was thus blocked up by sea. Renschild was astonished at a proposal which showed equal marks of skill and courage in a prince so young and inexperienced. Everything was immediately prepared for the descent, and orders given for the embarkation of five thousand men, who lay upon the coasts of Sweden, and joined the troops they had on board. The king quitted his large ship, and went into a frigate of less weight. They then began by sending off three hundred grenadiers in small shallops; and among those were some small flat-bottomed boats, which carried the fascines, the chevaux-de-frize, and the implements of the pioneers; then followed five hundred men in other shallops; and lastly came the king's chosen ships of war, together with two English and two Dutch frigates, who were to favor the debarkation, under cover of their cannon.

Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark, is situated in the island of Zealand, in the midst of a beautiful plain, having the Sound on the north-west, and the Baltic Sea on the east, where the King of Sweden then lay. At this unexpected movement

of the vessels, which threatened a descent, the inhabitants—confounded by the inactivity of their own fleet, and by the movements of the Swedish vessels—waited with terror to see on what part the storm would break. The Swedish fleet stood over against Humblebeck, about seven miles from Copenhagen, at which place the Danes instantly assembled their cavalry. Their foot were posted behind entrenchments, and all the artillery they could bring up was turned against the Swedes.

The king then quitted his frigate, and got into the first barge, at the head of his guards; when he thus addressed the French ambassador, who was standing next to him, in Latin (for he would never speak French): “You have nothing, Mr. Ambassador, to do with the Danes: you need go no farther, if you please.” “Sire,” answered the Count de Guiscard, in French, “the king my master ordered me to reside with your majesty; I flatter myself you will not banish me from your court, which was never more brilliant than it is to-day.” In saying this, he gave his hand to the king, who leaped into the barge, into which Count Piper and the ambassador immediately followed. They advanced under shelter of the cannon of the ships which favored their landing. The long boats were as yet but three hundred paces from the shore, when Charles, impatient at their slow motion, threw himself from his barge into the sea, sword in hand, having the water above his waist; his ministers, the French ambassador, the officers and soldiers, immediately followed his example, and marched to

the shore, in spite of a shower of the enemy's musketry. The king, who had never in his life heard a volley of muskets loaded with ball, demanded of Major-General Stuart, whom he perceived near him, what it was that occasioned the whizzing in his ears. "It is the noise of the musket balls they fire upon you," said the major to him. "Good," replied the king; "then from henceforward that shall be my music." At this instant the major received a musket-shot in his shoulder; and a lieutenant dropped down dead on the other side of the king.

It generally happens that the troops who are attacked in trenches are at a disadvantage, because those making the attack acquire an impetuosity of which those who are merely on the defense are deprived; besides, the waiting the enemy's approach is often an acknowledgment of their own weakness, and of their adversary's superiority. This was the case with the Danish cavalry and militia, which, after a feeble resistance, took to flight. The king thus became master of their entrenchments, and fell upon his knees to return thanks to God for this first success of his arms. He immediately caused redoubts to be raised towards the town, and himself pointed out a place for the encampment. In the meantime he sent back his transports to Schonen, a part of Sweden bordering upon Copenhagen, for a reinforcement of nine thousand men. Everything conspired to favor Charles' activity. These troops were already assembled on the shore, and ready to embark; accordingly the next day they arrived with a favorable wind.

**This** transportation was effected in the sight of the Danish fleet, which did not dare to advance. Copenhagen being intimidated, immediately despatched deputies to the king to beseech him not to bombard the town. He received them on horseback at the head of his regiment of guards, and the deputies threw themselves on their knees before him. He made the town pay him four hundred thousand rix-dollars, and ordered them to bring in all sorts of provisions to the camp, for which he promised faithfully to pay. They carried him the provisions, because it was necessary to obey, although they did not much expect that the conquerors would have so much condescension: the carriers, however, were greatly astonished at being paid generously, and without delay, by the lowest soldiers in the army. There had long prevailed among the Swedish troops a strict discipline, which had not a little contributed to this victory; and the young king increased its severity. There was not a soldier that dared to refuse payment for what he bought, still less to go a-plundering, nor even to go out of the camp. He did still more, for, in a victory, his troops did not strip the dead till they had received his permission; and he easily brought them to observe this law. Prayers were regularly said in his camp twice a day, at seven o'clock in the morning, and at four in the afternoon; at which he never failed to assist in person, and to set the soldiers an example of piety as well as of valor. His camp, much better regulated than even the city of Copenhagen, had everything in abundance; the

peasants preferred selling their commodities to the Swedes their enemies, rather than to the Danes, who did not pay them so well. Even the citizens were obliged to come, more than once, to seek in the camp of the King of Sweden those provisions which their own markets failed to furnish.

The King of Denmark was at this time in Holstein, whither he seemed to have gone for no other purpose than to raise the siege of Tonningen. He saw the Baltic Sea covered with the enemy's ships, a young conqueror already master of Zealand, and ready to seize on his capital. He therefore caused it to be published throughout his dominions, that those who took up arms against the Swedes should have their liberty. This declaration was of great weight in a country formerly free, but in which, at that time, all the peasants, and even many of the citizens, were slaves. Charles sent word to the King of Denmark that he made war only to oblige him to make peace, and that he must either resolve to do justice to the Duke of Holstein, or see Copenhagen destroyed, and his kingdom put to the fire and sword. The Dane was too happy to deal with a conqueror who piqued himself on his justice. A congress was assembled in the town of Travendal, on the frontiers of Holstein. The King of Sweden would not suffer the negotiations to be delayed by the arts of ministers, but was determined that the treaty should be finished with the same rapidity with which he had descended into Zealand. It was, in effect, concluded on the 5th of August, to the advantage of the Duke of Holstein, who was indem-



nified for all the expenses of the war, and delivered from oppression. The King of Sweden, satisfied with having succored his ally, and humbled his enemy, would accept of nothing for himself. Thus Charles XII., at the age of eighteen years, began and finished this war in less than six weeks.

It was precisely at this time that the King of Poland invested the town of Riga, the capital of Livonia, and the Czar also advanced, on the side of the east, at the head of nearly a hundred thousand men. Riga was defended by the old Count d'Alberg, a Swedish general, who, at the age of eighty, joined the fire of a young man to the experience of sixty campaigns. Count Fleming, afterwards minister of Poland, a great man in the field as well as in the cabinet, and Patkul the Livonian, pressed the siege under the inspection of the king; but in spite of several advantages the besiegers had gained, the experience of the old Count d'Alberg rendered their efforts useless, and the King of Poland despaired of taking the town. He at last laid hold of an honorable pretence for raising the siege. Riga was full of merchandise belonging to the Dutch. The States-General ordered their ambassador at the court of Augustus to make representations to him on that head. The King of Poland needed not much entreaty. He consented to raise the siege rather than occasion the least damage to his allies; who were not astonished at this excess of complaisance, of which they knew the true cause.

There remained then nothing more for Charles to do, in order to finish his first campaign, than to

march against his rival in glory, Peter Alexiowitz. He was the more exasperated against him, as there were at that time at Stockholm three Muscovite ambassadors, who had just sworn to the renewal of an inviolable peace. He could not comprehend, as he piqued himself on a most rigid integrity, that a legislator, like the Czar, could make a jest of what ought to be so sacred. The young prince, full of honor himself, did not imagine that there could be a system of morality for kings different from that for individuals. The Emperor of Muscovy had just published a manifesto, which he had much better have suppressed. He there alleged that the reason of his making war was, that he had not sufficient honor paid him when he passed *incognito* through Riga; and likewise, that they sold their provisions to his ambassadors at too dear a rate. It was for these injuries that he ravaged Ingria with eighty thousand men.

He appeared before Narva, at the head of this great army, on the first of October, at a season of the year more severe in this climate than it is in the month of January at Paris. The Czar, who in this inclement season would sometimes ride post four hundred leagues to see a mine or a canal, was not more careful of his troops than of himself. Besides, he knew that the Swedes, since the time of Gustavus Adolphus, could make war in the midst of winter as well as in summer; he therefore wished to accustom the Russians likewise to know no distinction of seasons, and to render them one day not in the least inferior to the Swedes.

In this manner, at a time when the ice and snow obliged other nations, even in temperate climates, to suspend war, did the Czar Peter besiege Narva, within thirty degrees of the Pole, while Charles XII. advanced to relieve it. The Czar was no sooner arrived before the place than he hastened to put in practice what he had just learned in his travels. He marked out his camp, fortified it on every side, raised redoubts at due distances, and opened the trenches himself. He had given the command of his army to the Duke de Croi, a German, and a skilful general, but who, at that time, was little assisted by the Russian officers. As for himself, he held no other rank in his own troops than that of a lieutenant. He thus set the example of military obedience to the nobility, who were till then undisciplined, and who were only used to govern ill-armed slaves, without experience or order. It was not to be wondered at, that he who turned carpenter at Amsterdam to procure himself fleets, should serve as lieutenant at Narva to teach his country the art of war.

The Russians are robust, indefatigable, and perhaps as brave as the Swedes; but time and discipline alone can render troops warlike and invincible. The only regiments from which anything was expected were commanded by German officers, but they were few in number. The rest were barbarians, forced from the forests, and covered with the skins of wild beasts; some were armed with arrows and some with clubs; few of them had fusees; none had seen a regular siege; nor was

there a good gunner in the whole army. A hundred and fifty cannon, which ought to have reduced the little town of Narva to ashes, were scarcely able to make a breach; while, on the other hand, the artillery of the city destroyed at every discharge whole ranks of the enemy in their trenches. Narva was almost without fortifications; and the Baron de Hoorn, who commanded it, had not a thousand regulars; and yet this innumerable army could not reduce it in ten weeks.

It was the fifteenth of November when the Czar was apprised that the King of Sweden had crossed the sea with two hundred transports, and was upon the march to the relief of Narva. The Swedes were but twenty thousand strong; yet the Czar had no superiority but in number. Far then from despising his enemy, he employed every art he was master of to overpower him. Not content with eighty thousand men, he prepared another army to oppose him, and to cross him at every turn. He had already ordered nearly thirty thousand men to advance by long marches from Pleskow. He then took a step which would have rendered him contemptible, if a legislator who had performed so many great exploits could be made so. He quitted his camp, where his presence was necessary, in quest of this fresh body of men, which might have arrived very well without him, and appeared by this behavior to be afraid of engaging in an intrenched camp a young and inexperienced prince who might come to attack him.

But, be this as it may, he wanted to inclose

Charles between two armies. This was not all; thirty thousand men, detached from the camp which lay before Narva, were posted a league from the city, on the road along which the King of Sweden was to pass; twenty thousand strelitz\* were placed at a greater distance on the same road, and five thousand others formed an advanced guard. All these troops Charles was obliged to march past before he could arrive at the camp, which was fortified with a rampart and a double ditch. The King of Sweden had landed at Pernau, in the Gulf of Riga, with about sixteen thousand of his infantry, and a little more than four thousand horse. From Pernau he hastened his march to Revel, followed by all his cavalry, and only four thousand foot. As he always marched on first, without waiting for the rest of his troops, he soon found himself, with his eight thousand men only, near the advanced posts of the enemy. He did not hesitate a moment about attacking them; and did so, one after the other, without giving them time to be acquainted with his small numbers. The Muscovites seeing the Swedes thus rush upon them, thought they had the whole army to encounter, and the advanced guard of five thousand men at once betook themselves to flight, although they were posted at a station among the rocks, where one hundred resolute men might have repulsed a whole army. The twenty thousand men who were behind, seeing their companions flying, caught the alarm, and carried disorder with them into the camp. All the

\* An order of militia or janizaries; see page 27.

posts were carried in two days; and what upon other occasions would have been counted for three victories, did not retard the march of the king a single hour. At last he appeared, with his eight thousand men, fatigued with so long a march, before a camp of eighty thousand Muscovites, defended by one hundred and fifty pieces of cannon; and scarcely had the troops taken a short repose, when, without deliberating, he gave orders for the attack.

The signal was two fusees, and the motto in German, "*With the help of God.*" A general officer having represented to him the greatness of the danger, "Why! do you imagine," said he to him, "that with my eight thousand brave Swedes, I shall not be able to march over the bodies of eighty thousand Muscovites?" A moment after, fearing that there appeared a little gasconade in these words, he ran after the officer himself, and asked him, "Are you, then, not of my opinion? Have I not a double advantage over my enemies? the one, that their cavalry can do them no service; and the other, that the place being narrow, their great number will but incommode them; and therefore I shall in reality be stronger than they." The officer did not dare to be of a different opinion; and they marched against the Muscovites, about mid-day, on the 10th of November 1700.

As soon as the cannon of the Swedes had made a breach in their intrenchments, they advanced with their bayonets fixed on their fusees, having at their backs a furious shower of snow, which came

in the face of the enemy. The Russians stood their ground for half-an-hour without quitting their side of the trenches. The king made his attack upon the right of the camp, where the quarters of the Czar were, hoping to encounter him, not knowing that the Czar himself was gone to seek the forty thousand men who were expected to arrive every moment. At the first discharge of the enemy's muskets, the king received a shot in his neck; but being a spent ball, it lodged in the folds of his black necktie, and did him no harm. His horse was killed under him. M. de Spart told me that the king sprang nimbly upon another horse, saying, "These gentry here make me do my exercise;" and continued fighting and giving orders with the same presence of mind. After three hours' engagement the entrenchments were forced on every side. The king followed the right of the enemy as far as the river Narva, with his left wing, if about four thousand men who were pursuing nearly forty thousand can be so called. Here the bridge broke under the fugitives, and the river was in a moment filled with the dead. The others, in a state of desperation, returned to their camp, without knowing where they went. There they found some barracks, behind which they posted themselves. Not being able to make their escape, they defended themselves for some time; but at last their Generals Dolgorouky, Gollofkin, and Fédérowits, surrendered themselves to the king, and laid their arms at his feet. At the same time the Duke de Croi, general of the army, arrived, who likewise surrendered himself, with thirty officers.

Charles received all these prisoners of distinction with as much politeness, and in as friendly a manner, as if he had been paying them the honors of an entertainment in his own court. He detained none but the generals. All the subaltern officers and soldiers were conducted, unarmed, as far as the river Narva, and there furnished with boats that they might pass over to their own country. In the meantime night approached, and the Muscovites on the right still continued fighting. The Swedes had not lost fifteen hundred men, while eighteen thousand Muscovites had been killed in their entrenchments, a great number drowned, and many had passed the river; yet there still remained a sufficient number in the camp to have entirely destroyed the Swedes. But it is not the number of the dead, it is the terror of the survivors that occasions the loss of battles. The king took the advantage of the small part of the day that remained to seize the enemy's artillery. He posted himself advantageously between their camp and the town, where he slept some hours on the ground, wrapped up in his cloak, waiting for daybreak, that he might fall on the enemy's left wing, which was not yet entirely routed. But at two o'clock in the morning, General Wade, who commanded that wing, having heard of the gracious reception the king had given to the other generals, and in what manner he had dismissed all the subaltern officers and soldiers, sent to beseech the same favor. The conqueror told him that he had nothing to do but to approach at the head of his army, and lay down his arms and



colors at his feet. Accordingly this general soon afterwards appeared with his Muscovites, who were about thirty thousand in number. They marched uncovered, soldiers and officers, through less than seven thousand Swedes. The soldiers, in passing before the king, threw their guns and swords upon the ground, and the officers laid their ensigns and colors at his feet. He caused the whole of this multitude to be conducted over the river, without detaining a single soldier prisoner. If he had kept them, the number of the prisoners would have been at least five times greater than that of the conquerors.

He then entered victorious into Narva, accompanied by the Duke de Croi, and other general officers of the Muscovites. He caused their swords to be returned to them; and knowing that they wanted money, and that the merchants of Narva would not lend them any, he sent a thousand ducats to the Duke de Croi, and five hundred to each of the Muscovite officers, who could not cease admiring this treatment, of which they had not even an idea. An account of the victory was immediately drawn up for transmission to Stockholm and the Swedish allies; but the king struck out with his own hand everything which appeared too much in praise of himself, and to detract from the Czar. His modesty could not, however, prevent the inhabitants of Stockholm from striking several medals to perpetuate the memory of these events. Among others, they struck one which represented the king, on one side, standing on a pedestal, to

which were chained a Muscovite, a Dane, and a Pole; on the other side was a Hercules, armed with his club, having under his feet a Cerberus, with this inscription: *Tres uno contrudit ictu.*

Among the prisoners taken at the battle of Narva, there was one who exhibited a striking instance of the revolutions of fortune. He was the eldest son and heir of the King of Georgia, and called the Czarasis Artschelou. This title of Czarasis signifies a prince, or son of the Czar among the Tartars, as well as in Muscovy; for the word czar, or tsar, meant a king among the ancient Scythians, from whom all these people are descended, and is not derived from the Cæsars of Rome, so long unknown to these barbarians. His father Mitelleski, Czar, and master of the most beautiful part of the country which lies between the mountains of Ararat and the eastern coasts of the Black Sea, had been driven from his throne by his own subjects in 1688, and had chosen rather to throw himself into the arms of the Emperor of Muscovy than have recourse to the Turks. The son of this king, at the age of nineteen, desired to follow Peter the Great in his expedition against the Swedes, and was taken fighting by some Finland soldiers, who had already stripped him, and were going to kill him, when Count Renschild rescued him from their hands, clothed him, and presented him to his master. Charles sent the unhappy prince to Stockholm, where he died a few years after. The king, on seeing him depart, could not help making, in the hearing of his officers, a natural reflection on

the strange destiny of an Asiatic prince, born at the foot of Mount Caucasus, going to live a captive among the snows of Sweden. "It is," said he, "as if I were one day to be a prisoner among the Tartars of the Crimea." These words made no impression at the time; but in the course of events they were remembered too well, when they were converted into a prediction.

The Czar was advancing by long marches with the army of forty thousand Russians, expecting to surround his enemy on all sides; when he heard, before he had proceeded half-way, of the battle of Narva, and the dispersion of his whole camp. He was not so obstinate as to think of attacking with his forty thousand men, without experience or discipline, a conqueror who had just destroyed eighty thousand men in their entrenchments. He retraced his footsteps, and pursued without ceasing the design of disciplining his troops at the same time that he civilized his subjects. "I know very well," he said, "the Swedes will beat us for a long time, but in the end they themselves will teach us to beat them." Moscow, his capital, was in terror and confusion at this defeat. Nay, such was the pride and ignorance of this people, that they imagined they had been conquered by a power more than human, and that the Swedes were real magicians. This opinion was so general, that public prayers were ordered to be put up on this occasion to St. Nicholas, patron of Muscovy. This prayer, too singular not to be recorded, ran as follows:

"O thou, who art our perpetual consoler in all our ad-

versities, great St. Nicholas, infinitely powerful, by what sin have we offended thee in our sacrifices, kneelings, bowings, and thanksgivings, that thou hast thus abandoned us? We have implored thy assistance against these terrible, insolent, enraged, dreadful, and unconquerable destroyers, when, like lions and bears who have lost their young, they have attacked, terrified, wounded, and killed by thousands us thy people. As it is impossible that this can be without sorcery and enchantment, we beseech thee, O great St. Nicholas, to be our champion and our standard-bearer, to deliver us from this tribe of sorcerers, and to drive them far from our frontiers, with the recompense that is their due."

In the meantime that the Muscovites were complaining to St. Nicholas of their defeat, Charles XII. returned thanks to God, and prepared himself for new victories.

The King of Poland had reason to expect that his enemy, after conquering the Danes and Muscovites, would presently fall upon him; he therefore united himself firmer than ever with the Czar. These two princes agreed upon an interview, that they might take their measures in concert. They met at Birzen, a small town in Lithuania, without any of those formalities which only serve to retard business, and which were not suited either to their situation or their humor. The princes of the north meet each other with a familiarity which is not yet established in the southern parts of Europe. Peter and Augustus passed five days together, in pleasures which bordered upon excess; for the Czar, though he wanted to reform his nation, could never correct his own dangerous propensity to debauchery.

The King of Poland, on his part, engaged to furnish the Czar with fifty thousand German troops, which were to be hired of different princes, and for which the Czar was to pay. The Czar on his side was to send fifty thousand Russians into Poland to learn the art of war, and he promised to pay Augustus three millions of rix-dollars in two years. This treaty, if it had been executed, might have been fatal to the King of Sweden; it was a ready and sure method of rendering the Muscovites good soldiers; it was, perhaps, forging chains for a part of Europe.

Charles prepared himself to prevent the King of Poland from reaping the fruit of this league. After having passed the winter at Narva, he appeared in Livonia, in the neighborhood of Riga, the very town which Augustus had besieged in vain. The Saxon troops were posted along the river Duna, which is very broad in that place. Charles, who was on the other side of the river, was obliged to dispute their passage. The Saxons were not commanded by their prince, who was sick, but by the Marshal de Stenau, who acted as general, and had in his service Prince Ferdinand, Duke of Courland,—and that very Patkul, who having formerly vindicated the rights of his country with his pen, at the hazard of his life, against Charles XI., now defended it with his sword against Charles XII. The King of Sweden had caused some large boats to be built on a new plan, the sides of which were much higher than ordinary, and could be raised or let down like a drawbridge.

When raised, they covered the troops on board ; and when let down, they served as bridges to land them. He made use also of another artifice. Having remarked that the wind blew from the north, where he lay, to the south, where the enemy's camps were, he ordered that they should set fire to a quantity of wet straw. From this a thick smoke arose, and so spread itself over the river, that the Saxons were prevented from seeing his troops, or observing what he was about. Under the cover of this cloud, he ordered several boats to put off full of the like wet fuel ; so that the cloud always increased, and was driven by the wind into the eyes of the enemy, making it impossible for them to know whether the king was passing the river or not. Meanwhile he conducted the execution of his stratagem alone. Having got over the greater part of the river, he said to General Renschild, " Well, the Duna will be as favorable to us as the sea of Copenhagen ; believe me, general, we shall beat them." He arrived in a quarter of an hour at the other side ; and was mortified that he was the fourth person that leaped on shore. He immediately landed his cannon, and formed a line of battle, while the enemy, blinded with smoke, could not oppose him, except by a few random shot. The wind having dispersed the smoke, the Saxons saw the King of Sweden already advancing towards them.

Marshal Stenau lost **not** a moment ; scarcely had he perceived the **Swedes**, when he fell on them with the best part of his cavalry. The violent

shock falling upon the Swedes at the instant they were forming their battalions, threw them into disorder. They gave way, were broken and pursued even into the river. The King of Sweden rallied them in a moment in the middle of the water, as easily as if he had been exercising at a review; after which his soldiers marched more compact than before, repulsed Marshal Stenau, and advanced into the plain. Stenau, finding that his troops were surprised, withdrew them, like an able general, into a dry place, flanked with a morass and a wood, where his artillery lay. The advantage of the ground, and the time thus given to the Saxons to recover their first surprise, restored their former courage. Charles did not hesitate to attack them; he had fifteen thousand men with him; Stenau and the Duke of Courland about twelve thousand, with no other artillery than one dismounted iron cannon. The battle was obstinate and bloody; the duke had two horses killed under him; he penetrated three times into the centre of the king's guard; but at last having been knocked off his horse by a blow with the butt-end of a musket, disorder prevailed throughout his army, and victory was no longer disputed. His cuirassiers carried him off with great difficulty, bruised and half dead, from the thickest of the fight, and from under the horses' heels, which trampled on him.

The King of Sweden, after his victory, hastened to Mittau, the capital of Courland. All the towns of this duchy surrendered to him at discretion, so that it was a journey rather than a conquest. He

passed without delay into Lithuania, conquering as he went along. He felt a fluttering satisfaction, and he confessed it, when he entered as conqueror the town of Birzen, where the King of Poland and the Czar had conspired against him some months before.

It was in this place that he first conceived the design of dethroning the King of Poland, by the hands of the Poles themselves. Being one day at table, his mind entirely taken up with this enterprise, and observing his usual temperance of diet, he was wrapped in profound silence, and seemed absorbed in the greatness of his conceptions, when a German colonel, who was present at dinner, observed, loud enough to be heard, that the repast which the Czar and the King of Poland had made in the same place was somewhat different from that of his majesty. "Yes," said the king, rising, "and I shall the more easily spoil their digestion." In short, intermixing a little policy with the force of his arms, he did not delay to prepare the event which he had meditated.

Poland, a part of the ancient Sarmatia, is a little larger than France, but less populous, though it is more so than Sweden.\* Its inhabitants were converted to Christianity only about seven hundred

\*This statement refers to Poland as it was before the first partition of 1772. This act was first projected by the King of Prussia (who had long felt an ambition to possess Polish or Western Prussia), and it was accomplished by the concurrence of the then reigning monarchs of Russia and Austria. The whole territory was eventually divided among these three powers.



and fifty years ago. It is very singular that the language of the Romans, who never penetrated into this country, is at this time spoken nowhere in common but in Poland; there everybody speaks Latin, even among the very servants. This extensive country is very fertile: and the people are consequently less industrious. The artists and traders you meet with in Poland are Scots, French, Jews, who buy at a low price corn, cattle, and the different commodities of the country; these they dispose of at Dantzic and in Germany, and sell to the nobles at a high price, to gratify the only species of luxury which they know and love. Thus this country, watered with the most beautiful rivers, rich in pastures, in salt mines, and covered with luxuriant crops, remains poor in spite of its plenty, because the people are slaves, and the nobility are proud and indolent.

Its government is the most perfect model of the ancient government of the Goths and Celtæ, which has been corrected or altered everywhere else. It is the only state which has preserved the name of a republic with the royal dignity.

Every gentleman has a right to give his vote in the election of a king; and may even be elected himself. This most estimable right is attended with the greatest abuses; the throne is almost always put up to auction; and as a Pole is seldom rich enough to buy it, it has been often sold to strangers. The nobility and clergy defend their rights against the king, and deprive the rest of the nation of theirs. All the people are slaves;

such is the destiny of men who, though the majority in number, are everywhere, by some means or other, subjected to the minority. There the peasant sows not for himself, but for his lord; to whom himself, his lands, and the labor of his hands, belong, and who can sell him, or cut his throat, as he would the beast in his field. All who are gentlemen are independent. There must be an assembly of the whole nation to try him in a criminal cause; and as he cannot be seized till he is condemned, he is hardly ever punished. There are a great number of poor; these engage in the services of the most powerful, receive a salary, and do the meanest offices for it. They like better to serve even their equals than to enrich themselves by commerce; and as they dress their masters' horses, give themselves the title of electors of kings, and destroyers of tyrants.

Whoever sees the King of Poland in the pomp of royal majesty, would believe him the most absolute prince in Europe; he is, however, the least so. The Poles really make that contract with him, which in other nations is mere supposition between the king and his subjects. The King of Poland, even at his consecration, and in swearing to the *pacta conventa*, absolves his subjects from the oath of obedience, in case he violates the laws of the republic.

He fills up all offices, and confers all honors. Nothing is hereditary in Poland but the land and the rank of the nobility. The son of a palatine, or of the king, has no right to the dignities of his father; but there is this great difference between

the king and the republic, that the former can take away no office after he has given it; while the republic may take away the crown from him if he transgresses the laws of the state.

The nobility, jealous of their liberty, often sell their votes, but seldom their affections. Scarcely have they elected a king, when, fearing his ambition, they oppose him by their cabals. The grandees whom he has made, and whom he cannot unmake, often become his enemies, instead of remaining his creatures. Those who are attached to the court are objects of hatred to the rest of the nobility. This always forms two parties; an unavoidable division, and even necessary in those countries where they will choose to have at the same time kings, and to preserve their liberties.

Whatever concerns the nation is regulated in the states-general, which they call Diets. These states are composed of the body of the senate, and of several gentlemen. The senators are the palatines and the bishops; the second order is composed of the deputies of the particular diets of each palatinate. At these great assemblies, the Archbishop of Gnesna, primate of Poland, and viceroy of the kingdom during the interregnum, presides, and is the first man of the state, next to the king. There is seldom any other cardinal in Poland but him; because the Roman purple giving no precedence in the senate, a bishop who might be equal to a cardinal, would be obliged either to take his rank as senator, or renounce the solid rights of the dignity of his own country, to support the pretensions of a foreign honor.

These diets, by the laws of the kingdom, ought to be held alternately in Poland and Livonia. The deputies often decide their business sword in hand, in the same manner as the ancient Sarmatians, from whom they are descended, and sometimes even in liquor, a vice of which the Sarmatians were ignorant. Every gentleman deputed to the states-general enjoys the same right as a tribune of Rome of opposing the laws of the senate. Any one gentleman who says "I protest," stops by that single word the unanimous resolutions of all the rest; and if he leaves the place where the diet is held, the assembly is dissolved.

They apply to the disorders which arise from this law, a remedy more dangerous than the disease. Poland is seldom without two factions: unanimity in their diets, therefore, being impossible, each party forms confederacies, in which they decide by the plurality of voices, without paying any regard to the protests of the minority. These assemblies, not warranted by law, but authorized by custom, are held in the name of the king, though often without his consent, and against his interest; something in the manner in which the league in France made use of the name of Henry III. to ruin him; and as the Parliament of England which brought Charles I. to the block, began by placing that prince's name to all the resolutions which they took to destroy him. When the commotions are finished, it is the part of the general diets to confirm or quash the acts of these confederacies. A diet can even alter everything that has been

done at preceding ones ; for the same reason that in monarchical countries a king can abolish the laws of his predecessor, and even his own.

The nobility, who make the laws of the republic, constitute also its strength. They appear on horseback upon any great occasion, and are able to form a body of above a hundred thousand men. This great army, called *the Pospolite*, moves with difficulty, and is ill governed : the difficulty of obtaining provision and forage makes it impossible for it to continue long assembled : it has neither discipline, subordination, nor experience ; but the love of liberty which animates it renders it always formidable.

These nobles may be conquered, or dispersed, or even held in slavery for a time, but they soon shake off the yoke ; indeed they compare themselves to the reed, which the wind bends to the ground, but which rises again as soon as the wind ceases to blow. It is for this reason that they have no places of strength : they will have themselves to be the only bulwark of the republic ; nor will they suffer their king to build any forts, for fear he should make use of them more to oppress than to defend them. Their country is, of course, entirely open, except two or three frontier towns. If in a war, either civil or foreign, they resolve to sustain a siege, they are obliged to raise fortifications of earth, repair the old walls that are half-ruined, and enlarge their ditches that are almost filled up, so that the town is generally taken before the intrenchments are completed.

The *Pospolite* are not always on horseback to defend the country; they never mount but by the order of the diets, though sometimes, in extreme dangers, by the simple order of the king.

The ordinary guard of Poland is an army, which ought always to be maintained at the expense of the republic. It is composed of two corps, under the command of two different commanders-in-chief. The first corps is that of Poland, and ought to consist of thirty-six thousand men: the second, to the number of twelve thousand, is that of Lithuania. The two generals are independent the one of the other; and though they are nominated by the king, they are accountable to nobody for their actions but the republic, and have an unlimited authority over their troops. The colonels are absolute masters of their regiments; and it belongs to them to maintain and pay the soldiery as they are able; but being seldom paid themselves, they ravage the country, and ruin the peasants, to satisfy their own avidity, and that of their soldiers. The Polish lords appear in these armies with more magnificence than they do in the towns; and their tents are more ornamented than their houses. The cavalry, which makes up two-thirds of the army, is composed of gentlemen; and is remarkable for the beauty of their horses, and the richness of their harness and accoutrements.

The gendarmes in particular, whom they distinguish into hussars and pancernes, never march without being accompanied by several valets, who hold their horses, which are adorned with plates

and nails of silver, embroidered saddles, saddle-bows, and gilt stirrups, and sometimes of massy silver, together with large housings trailing after the manner of the Turks, the magnificence of whom the Poles imitate as much as possible.

In the same degree that the cavalry is fine and superb, the infantry was then proportionably wretched, ill-clothed, unarmed, without regimentals, or anything uniform. It was so at least till about the year 1710. These infantry, who resembled wandering Tartars, supported with an astonishing fortitude hunger, cold, fatigue, and all the hardships of war. One may see in the Polish soldiers the character of the ancient Sarmatians, their ancestors—the same want of discipline, the same fury to attack, the same readiness to fly from and to return to the attack, and likewise the same disposition to slaughter when they are conquerors.

The King of Poland flattered himself at first, that in case of necessity these two armies would fight in his favor; that the Polish *pospolite* would arm themselves at his orders; and that all these forces, joined to the Saxons his subjects, and to the Muscovites his allies, would form a multitude before which the small band of Swedes would not dare to appear. But he saw himself almost at once deprived of these succors, by means of that very eagerness which he had shown to have them all at once.

Accustomed in his hereditary dominions to absolute power, he imagined too fondly that he might

govern in Poland as he did in Saxony. The beginning of his reign made malcontents; and his first proceedings irritated the party who had opposed his election, and alienated almost all the rest. The Poles murmured to see their towns filled with Saxon garrisons, and their frontiers lined with troops. The nation, indeed, was much more jealous of maintaining its liberty than anxious to attack its neighbors. It did not, therefore, regard the war of King Augustus against the Swedes, and the irruption into Livonia, as an enterprise advantageous to the republic. It is difficult to deceive a free people respecting its true interest. The Poles knew that if this war should be undertaken without their consent, and prove unsuccessful, their country, which was open on every side, would become a prey to the King of Sweden; and that if it was successful, they would be enslaved by their own king, who, being then master of Livonia and Saxony, would shut up Poland between these two states. In this alternative, in order that they might neither be slaves of the king whom they had elected, or be ravaged by Charles XII. who was justly incensed, they raised but one cry against the war, which they believed to have been declared more against themselves than Sweden. They regarded the Saxons and the Muscovites as the forgers of their chains; and seeing soon after that the King of Sweden had overcome every obstacle to his passage, and was advancing with a victorious army into the very heart of Lithuania, they raised an outcry against their sovereign with so much the more freedom, as he was unfortunate.



Two parties at this time divided Lithuania that of the Princes Sapieha, and that of Oginsky. These two factions began from private quarrels, and at last terminated in a civil war. The King of Sweden attached himself to the Princes Sapieha, and Oginsky, ill-supported by the Saxons, found his party almost annihilated. The Lithuanian army, whom these troubles, and the want of money, had reduced to a small number, was partly dispersed by the conquerors. The few who held out for the King of Poland were separated into small bodies of fugitive troops, who wandered about the country, and subsisted by rapine. Augustus saw nothing in Lithuania but the weakness of his own party, the hatred of his subjects, and a hostile army conducted by a young king, enraged, victorious, and implacable.

There was indeed an army in Poland, but instead of its being composed of thirty-six thousand men, the number prescribed by law, there were not even eighteen thousand; not only ill-paid and ill-armed, but with generals who knew not as yet which side they should take. The only resource of the king was to order his nobility to follow him; but he was afraid of exposing himself to a refusal, which would have discovered his weakness, and augmented it accordingly.

It was in this state of trouble and uncertainty that all the palatinates demanded a diet of the king, in the same manner as in England, when all the bodies of the state, in difficult times, present addresses to the king, beseeching him to convoke

a parliament. Augustus had more need of an army than a diet, in which the actions of the king are strictly scrutinised. However, it was necessary that he should assemble one, lest he should incense the nation beyond reconciliation. It was accordingly appointed to be held at Warsaw, the 2d of December in the year 1701. He soon perceived, however, that Charles had at least as much power as himself in this assembly. Those who favored the Sapiehas, the Lubomirsky, and their friends, the Palatine Leczinsky, treasurer of the crown (who owed his fortune to King Augustus), and especially the partisans of the Princes Sobiesky, were all secretly attached to the King of Sweden.

The most considerable of these partisans, and the most dangerous enemy the King of Poland had, was the Cardinal Radziejousky, Archbishop of Gnesna, primate of the kingdom, and president of the diet. He was a man full of artifice and mystery in his conduct, entirely governed by an ambitious woman, whom the Swedes called *Madame Cardinal*, and who never ceased engaging him in intrigue and faction. The talent of the primate consisted, as we are told, in making use of circumstances, without seeking to give birth to them. He appeared often to be irresolute, for who is not so in a civil war? King John Sobiesky, the predecessor of Augustus, had first made him bishop of Warmia, and vice-chancellor of the kingdom. Radziejousky, being yet but a bishop, had obtained the cardinalship by the favor of the same king. This dignity soon opened his way to that of

primate; thus uniting in his own person everything to impose upon mankind, he was in a state to undertake anything with impunity.

After the death of John, he made every exertion to place Prince James Sobiesky on the throne; but the torrent of hatred which the father had incurred, though truly a great man, overwhelmed his son. After this the cardinal primate joined the Abbé de Polignac, ambassador of France, to give the crown to the Prince of Conti, who was in effect elected. But money and Saxon troops triumphed over his negotiations. He suffered himself at last to be drawn over to the party that crowned the Elector of Saxony, and waited with patience for an opportunity of making a division between the nation and this new king.

The victories of Charles XII., protector of Prince James Sobiesky, the civil war in Lithuania, and the general alienation of men's minds from King Augustus, made the cardinal primate believe that the time was arrived when he might send Augustus into Saxony, and open to King John's son the way to the throne. This prince, formerly the innocent object of the hatred of the Poles, had begun to engage their affections from the time of their hatred to King Augustus; but he durst not as yet conceive an idea of so great a revolution, of which the cardinal was insensibly laying the foundation.

At first he seemed to wish to reconcile the king and the republic; he sent circular letters dictated, in appearance, by the spirit of concord and charity;

common and well-known snares, but with which men are always caught. He wrote an affecting letter to the King of Sweden, conjuring him, in the name of Him whom all Christians equally adored, to give peace to Poland and her king. Charles XII. answered the intentions of the cardinal rather than his words. In the meantime he remained in the great duchy of Lithuania with his victorious army, declaring that he would not disturb the diet; that he made war against Augustus and the Saxons, and not against the Poles; and that so far from attacking the republic, he came to relieve it from oppression. These letters and these answers were intended for the public. The emissaries continually coming and going between the cardinal and Count Piper, and the secret assemblies at the prelate's house, were the springs that regulated the motions of the diet; they proposed to send an ambassador to Charles XII., and unanimously demanded of the king that he would call no more Muscovites to his frontiers, and that he should also send back his Saxon troops.

The bad fortune of Augustus had already done what the diet required of him. The league secretly concluded at Birzen with the Muscovites was now become as useless as it had at first appeared formidable. He was far from being able to send to the Czar the fifty thousand Germans he had promised to raise in the empire. Even the Czar, a dangerous neighbor of Poland, was in no haste to assist with all his force a divided kingdom, from whose misfortunes he hoped to reap some advantage. He

contented himself with sending twenty thousand Muscovites into Lithuania, who did more mischief than the Swedes, flying everywhere before the conqueror, and ravaging the lands of the Poles, till at last, being pursued by the Swedish generals, and finding nothing more to pillage, they returned in numbers to their own country. With regard to the shattered remains of the Saxon armies beaten at Riga, Augustus sent them to winter and recruit in Saxony, in order that this sacrifice, involuntary as it was, might regain him the affections of the irritated Poles.

The war was now turning into intrigues. The diet was divided into almost as many factions as there were palatines. One day the interests of King Augustus prevailed, the next they were proscribed. Every one cried out for liberty and justice; but no one knew what it was either to be free or just. The time was lost by caballing in private and haranguing in public. The diet knew neither what they wanted, nor what they ought to do. Great assemblies have hardly ever taken right counsel in civil broils; because the most courageous amongst them are engaged in the sedition, and the well-disposed are generally a prey to their fears. The diet dissolved in tumult the 17th of February, in the year 1702, after three months of cabals and irresolution. The senators, who are the palatines and bishops, remained at Warsaw. The senate of Poland has the right to make laws provisionally, which the diets seldom disannul. This body being less numerous, and accustomed to busi-

ness, was far less tumultuous, and decided matters with greater despatch.

They decreed that they should send to the King of Sweden the embassy proposed in the diet; that the pospolite should mount their horses, and hold themselves in readiness at all events; they made several regulations to appease the troubles in Lithuania, and still more to lessen the authority of their king, which was more to be feared than that of Charles.

Augustus chose rather at that time to receive hard laws from his conqueror than from his subjects. He determined to sue for a truce from the King of Sweden, and wanted to make a secret treaty with him. It was necessary to conceal this step from the senate, whom he regarded as an enemy still more intractable than Charles. This was a delicate affair; he entrusted it to the Countess of Konigsmark, a Swedish lady of high birth, and to whom he was at that time attached. This lady, celebrated in the world for her wit and beauty, was more capable than any minister to bring a negotiation to a happy conclusion. Moreover, as she had an estate in the dominions of Charles XII., and had lived a long time in his court, she had a plausible pretext. She therefore went to the Swedish camp in Lithuania, and addressed herself directly to Count Piper, who too hastily promised her an audience with his master. The countess, among those perfections which rendered her one of the most amiable persons in Europe, had the singular talent of speaking the languages of several coun-

tries which she had never seen with as much elegance as if she had been born there; she even amused herself sometimes in writing French verses, which might have been mistaken for the production of a native of Versailles. Those she composed for Charles XII.'s history ought not to be omitted. She introduced the heathen gods praising the different virtues of Charles. The piece concluded thus :

Enfin chacun des Dieux discourant à sa gloire,  
Le plaçoit par avance au Temple de Memoire ;  
Mais Venus ni Bacchus n'en dirent pas un mot.

Nay, all the Gods to sound his fame combine,  
Except the Deities of love and wine.

All her wit and beauty were, however, thrown away upon a man like the King of Sweden, who constantly refused to see her. She therefore resolved to throw herself in his way as he rode out to take the air, which he frequently did. She one day met him in a narrow path : she descended from her carriage as soon as she perceived him ; the king made her a low bow, turned his horse about, and rode back in an instant ; so that the only advantage which she gained from her journey was the satisfaction of believing that the King of Sweden feared nobody but her.

The King of Poland was now obliged to throw himself into the arms of the senate. He therefore made them two proposals, by the Palatine of Marienburg ; the one, that they should leave to him the disposition of the army of the republic, to

whom he would pay, out of his own revenue, two quarters' advance; the other, that they should permit him to bring back twelve thousand Saxons into Poland. The cardinal primate returned him an answer as severe as the refusal of the King of Sweden. He told the Palatine of Marienburgh, in the name of the assembly, "that they had resolved to send an embassy to Charles XII., and that he would not advise him to bring back any Saxons."

The king, in this extremity, wished to preserve the appearance at least of royal authority. He sent one of his chamberlains, on his own part, to wait upon Charles, to know from him where and how his Swedish Majesty would be pleased to receive the embassy of his master and the republic. Unluckily they had forgotten to ask a passport from the Swedes for this chamberlain; the King of Sweden, therefore, instead of giving him audience, caused him to be thrown into prison, saying, "that he expected an embassy from the republic, and not from Augustus." This violation of the right of nations no law but that of a superior force could excuse.

Afterwards Charles, having left behind him garrisons in several towns in Lithuania, advanced beyond Grodno, a town well known in Europe for the diets that are held there, but ill built, and badly fortified.

A few miles on the other side of Grodno he encountered the embassy of the republic: it was composed of five senators. They desired, in the first place, to regulate the ceremony of their intro-



duction, a thing the king was unacquainted with : they then demanded that the republic should be styled " Most Serene," and that the coaches of the king and the senators should be sent to meet them. They were answered that the republic should be styled " Illustrious," and not " Most Serene," and that the king never made use of carriages ; that he had many officers about him, but no senators : that a lieutenant-general should be sent to meet them, and that they should come on their own horses.

Charles XII. received them in his tent, with some appearance of military pomp ; their discourse was full of caution and reserve. It was remarked that they were afraid of Charles, that they did not love Augustus, but that they were ashamed to take, by command of a stranger, the crown from a king whom they had elected. Nothing was concluded, and Charles gave them to understand that he would settle all disputes at Warsaw.

His march was preceded by a manifesto, which the cardinal and his party spread over Poland in eight days. Charles, by this writing, invited all the Poles to add their vengeance to his, and pretended to show them that his interest and theirs was the same. They were, however, very different : but the manifesto, supported by a great party, by the confusion of the senate, and the approach of the conqueror, made a very strong impression. They were obliged to own Charles for protector, because he would be so, and because it was happy for them that he contented himself with this title.

The senators who opposed Augustus published

this manifesto aloud, even in his presence ; the few who were attached to him observed a profound silence. At last, when they were apprised that Charles was advancing by long marches, they all prepared in the greatest confusion to depart. The cardinal quitted Warsaw among the first ; the greatest part fled with precipitation ; some retired to their estates to wait the end of the affair, while others went to arm their friends. Nobody returned with the king except the ambassadors of the Emperor and of the Czar, the Pope's nuncio, together with a few bishops and palatines attached to his fortunes. He was obliged to fly, as there was nothing as yet decided in his favor. He hastened, before his departure, to hold a council with the small number of senators who still represented the senate. But however zealous they were to serve him, they were nevertheless Poles ; and had all conceived so great an aversion to Saxon troops, that they did not dare to grant him the liberty of recalling more than six thousand men for his defence ; and even voted that those should be commanded by the grand general of Poland, and sent back as soon as they had made peace. The armies of the republic, indeed, they committed to his care.

After this resolution the king quitted Warsaw, too weak to resist his enemies, and little satisfied even with his own party. He immediately published orders for assembling the pospolite and the armies, which were little more than empty names. He had nothing to hope for in Lithuania, where the Swedes then were. The army of Poland,

reduced to a few troops, wanted arms, provision, and inclination to fight. The greatest part of the nobility, intimidated, irresolute, and disaffected, remained at their different estates. In vain did the king, authorized by the laws of the land, order, on pain of death, that every gentleman should mount his horse and follow him; it was become a problematical point whether they ought to obey him or not. His great resource was in the troops of the electorate, where the form of government being entirely absolute, did not leave him a doubt of their obedience. He had already secretly commanded twelve thousand Saxons to advance with precipitation. He likewise recalled the eight thousand men he had promised the emperor in his war against France, and whom the necessity to which he was reduced obliged him to withdraw. To introduce so many Saxons into Poland was to exasperate all minds, and violate the law made by his own party, who allowed him only six thousand; but he knew very well that if he was conqueror, they would not dare to complain, and if he was conquered, they would not forgive his having introduced even the six thousand. At the time these soldiers were arriving in troops, and he was going from one palatinate to another to assemble the nobility who were attached to him, the King of Sweden appeared before Warsaw on the 5th of May, 1702. At the first summons the gates were opened to him. He dismissed the Polish garrison, disbanded the city guard, established posts in every part of the town, and ordered the inhabitants to

come and deliver up their arms ; but, content with disarming them, and being unwilling to irritate them, he demanded a contribution of no more than one hundred thousand livres.

Augustus was at this time assembling his forces at Cracow, and was very much surprised to see the cardinal arrive there. This man pretended to keep up the decency of his character to the very last, and endeavored to dethrone the king with the exterior behavior of a good subject ; he gave him to understand that the King of Sweden appeared disposed to listen to a reasonable accommodation, and humbly asked permission to repair to him. The king granted him what he was not able to refuse, that is to say, the liberty of doing him mischief.

The cardinal primate hastened immediately to find the King of Sweden, before whom he had not as yet dared to present himself. This he succeeded in doing at Praag, near Warsaw, but without the ceremonies with which he had received the ambassadors of the republic. He found the conqueror dressed in a coat of coarse blue cloth, with gilt brass buttons, large boots, and buff-skin gloves, which came up to his elbows, in a chamber without tapestry, in which were his brother-in-law, the Duke of Holstein, Count Piper, his first minister, and several general officers. The king advanced several paces to meet the cardinal ; and they had a quarter of an hour's conference together, standing. Charles concluded by saying aloud, "I will not give peace to the Poles till they have elected another king."

The cardinal, who expected such a declaration, caused it to be immediately made known to all the palatinates, assuring them of the extreme sorrow he felt at it, and representing, at the same time, the necessity there was to obey the conqueror.

At this news the King of Poland plainly perceived that he must either lose the throne, or preserve it by a battle. He exhausted all his resources for this great decision. All his Saxon troops were arrived from the Saxon frontiers, and the nobility of the palatinate of Cracow, where he still was, came in crowds to offer him their services. He exhorted each of these gentlemen to remember their oaths, and they promised to shed the last drop of their blood to support him. Encouraged by their support, and by the troops who bore the name of the Army of the Crown, he went for the first time to seek, in person, the King of Sweden, whom he presently found advancing towards Cracow.

The two kings met on the 13th of July, in the year 1702, in a vast plain near Clissau, between Warsaw and Cracow. Augustus had nearly twenty-four thousand men, while Charles had no more than twelve thousand. The battle began by discharges of artillery. At the first volley from the Saxons, the Duke of Holstein, who commanded the Swedish cavalry, and who was a young prince of courage and virtue, was struck by a cannon ball. The king asked if he was killed, and was told that he was. He made no answer; some tears fell from his eyes; and he held his hand up to his face for a moment:

when all of a sudden he spurred his horse with all his might, and rushed into the midst of the enemy at the head of his guards.

The King of Poland did everything that could be expected by a prince who fought for his crown. He led his troops himself three times to the charge; but he had only the Saxons to fight with him; for the Poles, who formed his right wing, all fled at the commencement of the battle, some through fear, and others through disaffection. The good fortune of Charles carried all before it; and gained him a complete victory. He took possession of the enemy's camp, their colors and artillery, and of Augustus's military chest. He did not stop in the field of battle, but marched directly to Cracow, pursuing the King of Poland, who fled before him.

The citizens of Cracow were hardy enough to shut their gates against the conqueror. He caused them to be broken open, and the garrison did not dare to fire a single gun, but were driven with whips and canes into the castle, where the king entered with them. One officer of artillery only having courage to prepare himself to put the match to a cannon, Charles threw himself upon him, and tore it out of his hand. The commander threw himself on his knees before the king. Three Swedish regiments were quartered at discretion among the citizens, and the town taxed with a contribution of an hundred thousand rix-dollars. The Count of Steinbock, who was made governor of the town, having been told that there were some treasures hid in the tombs of the Kings of Poland, which are in the

church of St. Nicholas, had them opened, but found nothing except some ornaments of gold and silver which belonged to the church, of which, however, he took a part; and Charles even sent a gold cup to one of the Swedish churches, a deed which in itself would have incensed the Polish catholics against him, could anything have prevailed against the terror of his arms.

He departed from Cracow with a fixed resolution to pursue the King of Poland without ceasing; but a few miles from the town his horse fell, and he broke his thigh-bone. He was obliged to be carried back to Cracow, where he was confined to his bed for six weeks, in the hands of his surgeons. This accident gave Augustus a little respite. He immediately caused it to be reported throughout Poland and Germany that Charles XII. was killed by this fall. This false report, believed for some time, threw every mind into astonishment and apprehension. In this short interval he assembled at Marienburgh, and then in Lublin, all the orders of the kingdom, which before had been convoked at Sendomir. This assembly was very numerous, few of the palatinates refusing to send their deputies thither. He regained almost every heart by presents and promises, and that affability which is so necessary to absolute kings, to make themselves beloved, and to elected kings, to enable them to maintain their throne. The diet was soon undeceived with regard to the false report of the death of the King of Sweden; but an impetus having been given to this great body, it suffered

itself to be carried along by the impulse it had received, all the members swearing to continue faithful to their sovereign. So much are great assemblies given to change. The cardinal primate himself, affecting still to be attached to Augustus, came to the diet of Lublin, where he kissed the king's hand, and did not refuse to take the oath with the rest. The oath was that they had never attempted, nor ever would attempt, anything against Augustus. The king excused the cardinal from the first part of the oath, and the prelate blushed when he swore to the last. The result of this diet was, that the republic of Poland should maintain an army of fifty thousand men, at their own expense, for the use of their sovereign; that they should give six weeks to the Swedes to declare either for peace or war; and the same time to the Princes Sapieha, the first authors of the troubles in Lithuania, to come and ask pardon of the King of Poland.

But, during these deliberations, Charles recovered from his wound, and overturned everything before him. Always firm in the design of forcing the Poles to dethrone their king with their own hands, he caused a new assembly to be convoked at Warsaw, through the intrigues of the cardinal primate, to oppose that of Lublin. His generals represented to him that this affair might be attended with endless delays, and prove ineffectual at last; that in the meantime the Muscovites were improving in military science every day in presence of the troops he had left in Livonia and



Ingria ; that the skirmishes which often happened in those provinces between the Swedes and the Russians were not always attended with advantages to the former ; and lastly, that his presence there might very soon be necessary. Charles, as unshaken in his projects as impatient in his actions, replied, “ Should I be obliged to stay here fifty years, I will not depart till I have dethroned the King of Poland.”

He left the assembly at Warsaw to combat by their orations and writings that of Lublin, and to seek to justify their proceedings by the laws of the kingdom : laws always equivocal, which each party interprets to his own interest, and which success alone renders incontestable. As for himself, having increased his victorious troops with six thousand horse and eight thousand foot, which he had received from Sweden, he marched against the remainder of the Saxon army which he had beat at Clissau, and which had had time to rally and recruit while his fall from his horse had confined him to his bed. This army shunned his approach, and retired towards Prussia, to the north-west of Warsaw. The river Bug was between him and his enemies. Charles swam across it at the head of his cavalry, whilst the infantry sought a ford somewhat higher. They came up with the Saxons the 1st of May, 1703, at a place called Pultesk. General Stenau commanded them, to the number of about ten thousand. The King of Sweden, in his precipitate march, had no more than the same number, certain that a less number

would suffice. The terror of his arms was so great, that one half of the Saxon troops fled at his approach, without giving him battle. General Stenau stood, indeed, for a moment, with two regiments; but presently after was obliged to join in the general flight of his army, which was dispersed before it was conquered. The Swedes did not take more than a thousand prisoners, nor kill more than six hundred; having more difficulty to pursue than to defeat them.

Augustus having nothing but the remains of his Saxons, who were beaten on every side, retired in haste to Thorn, an ancient town of Prussia, situated on the Vistula, and under the protection of the Poles. Charles immediately prepared to besiege it; and the King of Poland, who did not think himself secure, retired, and fled into every corner of Poland where he could possibly assemble any soldiers, and into which the Swedes had not penetrated. In the meantime Charles, amidst so many rapid marches, swimming across rivers, and hurried along with his infantry mounted behind his cavalry, had not been able to bring up his cannon before Thorn, and was obliged to wait till it came from Sweden by sea.

While he was posted here, a few miles from the town, he would often advance too near the ramparts for the purpose of reconnoitring the enemy. The plain dress which he always wore, was, in these dangerous excursions, of more utility than he was aware of, as it prevented his being noticed and singled out by his enemies, who would have fired

upon his person. One day, having advanced near with one of his generals, named Lieven, who was dressed in a blue coat\* trimmed with gold, and being afraid that the general would be too easily distinguished, he ordered him to walk behind. This request was prompted by a natural magnanimity which prevented him from reflecting that he exposed his own life to imminent danger to save that of a subject. Lieven saw too late the error of putting on an attractive dress, which endangered all those who were near him; and fearing more for the king than for himself, hesitated whether he should obey. In the midst of this hesitation, the king took him by the arm, and placing himself in front, entirely screened him; but at this instant, a volley of cannon, which came in flank, struck the general dead on the spot which the king had scarcely quitted. The death of this man, killed exactly in his stead, and because he had endeavored to save him, contributed not a little to confirm him in the opinion, which he entertained throughout life, of an absolute predestination; and made him believe that his fate, which had preserved him in so singular a manner, had reserved him for the execution of yet greater things.

Everything succeeded with him: his negotiations and his arms were equally happy. He was present, as it were, in every part of Poland; for his Grand Marshal Renschild was in the heart of

\* In the first editions it was said that this general was in scarlet, but the chaplain Norberg has so well proved that his uniform was blue that we have corrected this error.

the kingdom with a large body of troops; about thirty thousand Swedes, under different generals, spread to the north and east, over the frontiers of Muscovy, withstood the efforts of the whole Russian empire; and Charles himself was in the west, at the other end of Poland, at the head of his choicest troops.

The King of Denmark, tied up by the treaty of Travendal, which his weakness had prevented him from breaking, remained silent. This monarch, always prudent, did not dare to discover his disgust at seeing the King of Sweden, so near his dominions. At a greater distance towards the south-west lay the duchy of Bremen, between the rivers Elbe and Weser, the most remote territory of the ancient Swedish conquests, filled with strong garrisons, and opening to the conqueror a free passage into Saxony and the empire. Thus, from the German Ocean almost to the mouth of the Boristhenes, comprehending the whole breadth of Europe, and even to the gates of Moscow, all was in consternation, and on the point of a general revolution. His ships, masters of the Baltic sea, were employed to transport into Sweden the prisoners he had made in Poland. Sweden, tranquil in the midst of these great commotions, enjoyed a profound peace, and shared in the glory of its king without bearing the burdens of war, as the victorious troops were paid and maintained at the expense of the conquered.

In this general silence of the north before the arms of Charles XII. the town of Dantzic dared

to displease him. Fourteen frigates—and forty transports were bringing the king a reinforcement of six thousand men, with cannon and ammunition, to begin the siege of Thorn. It was necessary for these succors to pass the Vistula. At the mouth of this river is Dantzic, a free and wealthy town, which enjoys with Thorn and Elbing, the same privileges in Poland that the imperial towns possess in Germany. Its liberty has been alternately attacked by the Danes, the Swedes, and several princes of Germany, and nothing has preserved it but the mutual jealousy of those powers. Count Steinbock, one of the Swedish generals, assembled the magistrates in the king's name, and demanded a passage for the troops and ammunition. The magistrates, with an imprudence common to those who treat with a superior power, were afraid either to refuse or absolutely to grant his request. The general, however, obliged them to grant him more than he had at first demanded; and even laid the town under a contribution of a hundred thousand crowns, by which means he made them pay for their imprudent hesitation. At last the reinforcement, cannon and ammunition, having arrived before Thorn, they began the siege on the 22d of September.

Robel, governor of this place, defended it for a month with a garrison of five thousand men; at the end of which time he was obliged to surrender at discretion. The garrison was made prisoners of war, and sent into Sweden. Robel was presented to the king disarmed. Charles, who never lost an

opportunity of acknowledging merit in his enemies, gave him a sword with his own hand, made him a considerable present in money, and dismissed him on his parole. The honor which the town of Thorn derived from having formerly given birth to Copernicus, the founder of the true system of the globe, was of no service to it with a conqueror too little acquainted with these subjects, and who had not yet learned to reward anything but valor. But this poor and paltry town was condemned to pay forty thousand crowns; an excessive contribution for such a place.

Elbing, built on an arm of the Vistula, founded by the Teutonic Knights, and annexed likewise to Poland, did not profit by the fault of the Dantzigers, but hesitated too long about giving passage to the Swedish troops. It was still more severely punished than Dantzic. Charles entered Elbing the 13th of December at the head of four thousand men, with bayonets fixed to the ends of their fusees. The inhabitants, struck with terror, threw themselves on their knees in the streets, and begged for mercy. He had them all disarmed, quartered his soldiers upon the citizens, and then having sent for the magistracy, he exacted that very day a contribution of two hundred and sixty thousand crowns. There were in the town two hundred pieces of cannon, and four hundred thousand weight of powder, which he seized. A battle gained could not have procured him so many advantages.

All these successes were the forerunners to the dethroning the King of Poland.

Scarcely had the cardinal sworn to his king that he would attempt nothing against him, than he repaired to the assembly at Warsaw, always under the pretext of peace. He arrived, speaking of nothing but of concord and obedience, though he was accompanied by a number of soldiers whom he had raised on his own estate. At last he threw off the mask, and on the 14th of February, 1704, in the name of the assembly, declared "Augustus, Elector of Saxony, incapable of wearing the crown of Poland." They all pronounced, with one voice, the throne to be vacant. The wish of the King of Sweden, and consequently that of the diet, was to give to Prince James Sobiesky the throne of the king his father, King John. James Sobiesky was at this time at Breslaw, in Silesia, waiting with impatience for the crown which his father had worn. He was one day hunting with Prince Constantine, one of his brothers, a few miles from Breslaw, when thirty Saxon horsemen, secretly sent by King Augustus, rushing suddenly out of a neighboring wood, surrounded the two princes, and carried them off without resistance. Fresh horses had been provided, on which they were conducted to Leipsic, and there closely confined. This stroke deranged the measures of Charles, the cardinal, and the whole assembly of Warsaw.

Fortune, who sports with crowned heads, placed Augustus almost at the same instant in danger of being nearly taken himself. He was at table, three leagues from Cracow, relying upon an advanced guard posted at some distance, when General Rens-

child appeared, after having carried off his guard. The King of Poland had but just time to mount his horse, with ten others. General Renschild pursued him for three days, and was on the point of seizing him every moment. The king fled as far as Sendomir, the Swedish general still pursuing him; and it was only by singular good fortune that he escaped.

During all this time Augustus's party and that of the cardinal treated each other as traitors. The army of the Crown was divided between these two factions. Augustus, at last forced to accept of support from the Muscovites, repented that he had not had recourse to them sooner. One time he fled into Saxony, where his resources were exhausted; then he returned to Poland, where no one dared to assist him. On the other hand, the King of Sweden, victorious and tranquil, reigned over Poland more absolutely than Augustus had ever done.

Count Piper, who had a mind as much formed for politics as his master's was for true greatness, now proposed to Charles XII. that he should himself take the crown of Poland. He represented to him how easily it might be done, with a victorious army, and a powerful party in the heart of the kingdom already subdued. He tempted him with the title of "Defender of the Evangelic Religion," a name which flattered the ambition of Charles. It would be easy, he said, to do in Poland what Gustavus Vasa had done in Sweden—to establish Lutheranism, and to break the chains of the people, already enslaved by the nobility and clergy. Charles was tempted for a moment; but glory was his idol.



To that he sacrificed his own interest, and the pleasure he would have enjoyed in taking Poland from the Pope. He told Count Piper that he was more flattered by giving than gaining kingdoms; and added, smiling, "You were intended for the minister of an Italian prince."

Charles was still near Thorn, in that part of Prussia which belongs to Poland; from whence he extended his views to what was passing at Warsaw, and kept the neighboring powers in awe. Prince Alexander, brother to the two Sobieskies who were carried into Silesia, came and implored his assistance to revenge his wrongs. Charles granted his request, and so much the more readily, as he imagined he could revenge himself at the same time. But being impatient in his desire to give a king to Poland, he proposed to Prince Alexander the propriety of his mounting the throne, from which fortune seemed determined to exclude his brother. Charles little expected a refusal; but Prince Alexander intimated that nothing should ever induce him to profit by the misfortunes of his elder brother. The King of Sweden, Count Piper, all his friends, and particularly the young Palatine of Posnania,—Stanislaus Leczinsky,—pressed him to accept the crown; but he was resolute. The neighboring princes heard with astonishment of this uncommon occurrence, and knew not which to admire most,—a King of Sweden who, at twenty-two years of age, gave away the crown of Poland, or Prince Alexander who refused it.

### BOOK III.

Stanislaus Leczinsky elected King of Poland—Death of the Cardinal Primate—Skilful retreat of General Schulembourg—Exploits of the Czar—Foundation of Petersburg—Battle of Frauenstad—Invasion of Germany—Peace of Altranstad—Augustus abdicates the Crown in favor of Stanislaus—General Patkul, the Czar's Plenipotentiary, broken upon the Wheel—Charles receives the Ambassadors of Foreign Princes—Hasty visit to Augustus at Dresden—Leaves Saxony.

YOUNG STANISLAUS LECZINSKY was at this time deputed by the assembly of Warsaw to make a report to the King of Sweden on several differences which had arisen during the absence of Prince James. Stanislaus had a happy countenance, full of boldness and sweetness, with an air of probity and frankness, which, of all external advantages, is the greatest, and gives more force to words than even eloquence itself. The wisdom with which he discoursed of King Augustus, the assembly, the cardinal primate, and of the different interests which divided Poland, struck Charles. King Stanislaus honored me by relating the following conver-

sation he had had with the King of Sweden, in Latin: "How can we proceed to an election, if the two Princes James and Constantine Sobiesky are captives?" To which Charles answered, "How can we deliver the republic, if we do not make an election?" This conversation was the only intrigue that placed Stanislaus on the throne. Charles prolonged the conference, that he might the better sound the genius of the young deputy. After the audience, he said aloud, that till then he had not seen a man so well suited to reconcile all parties. He made no delay in informing himself of the character of the Palatine Leczinsky. He learnt that he was full of bravery, and inured to fatigue; that he accustomed himself to sleep on a straw mattress, and would not have any of his domestics to attend his person; that he observed a temperance not common to that climate, possessed great economy, was adored by his vassals, and was, perhaps, the only nobleman in Poland who had any friends, at a time when men acknowledged no ties but those of interest and faction. This character, which in several particulars accorded with his own, determined him entirely; and at the end of the conference he said aloud, "There is the man that shall always be my friend;" which words, they soon perceived, signified, "There is the man that shall be king."

Charles, who had taken his resolution on the instant, could not have found in all Poland a man more proper to reconcile all parties than the person he had chosen. The leading features of his char-

acter were humanity and benevolence. When Stanislaus was afterwards withdrawn into the Duchy of Deux Ponts, some partisans who had formed a design of carrying him off were taken in his presence: "What have I done to you," said he to them, "that you would deliver me to my enemies? Of what country are you?" Three of these adventurers replied that they were Frenchmen. "Well, then," said he, "be like your countrymen, whom I esteem, and be incapable of a vile action." When he had finished speaking, he gave them all that he had about him; his money, watch, and gold box, and they quitted him with tears and with admiration. This I know from two ocular witnesses.

I can say, with the same certainty, that one day as he was arranging the state of his household, he put upon the list a French officer who was attached to him. The treasurer asked in what quality his Majesty chose he should be upon the list. "In quality of my friend," said the prince.

I have seen a long work which he had composed, to reform, if it had been possible, the laws and manners of his country. In this writing he makes a sacrifice of the privileges of the nobility to which he belonged, and of the royal prerogative which had been given to him, to the public good, and to the necessities of the people: a sacrifice which is more glorious than the gaining of battles.

When the Primate of Poland found that Charles XII. had nominated the Palatine Leczinsky, as Alexander had nominated Abdalonimus, he repaired to the King of Sweden, to endeavor to

make him change this resolution, as he wished to give the crown to one Lubomirsky. "But what have you to allege against Stanislaus Leczinsky?" said Charles. "Sire," said the primate, "he is too young." To which the King dryly replied, "He wants but little of my age;" turned his back upon the prelate, and immediately sent the Count de Hoorn to signify to the assembly of Warsaw that it was necessary to elect a king in five days, and that they must also elect Stanislaus Leczinsky. The Count de Hoorn arrived on the 7th of July, and fixed the day of election on the 12th, in the same manner as he would have ordered the encampment of a battalion. The cardinal primate, disappointed at the result of so many intrigues, returned to the assembly, and exerted his whole strength to set aside an election in which he had no part. But the King of Sweden arriving at Warsaw incognito, obliged him for that time to be silent. All that the primate could now do was, not to be present at the election; and as he could neither oppose the conqueror, nor was willing to second him, he confined himself to a useless neutrality.

Saturday the 12th of July, the day fixed for the election, being come, they assembled at three o'clock in the afternoon, at Colo, the place appointed for this ceremony. The Bishop of Posnanian came and presided at the assembly, in the place of the cardinal primate. He arrived, attended by several gentlemen of the party. The Count de Hoorn and two other general officers assisted publicly at this solemnity, as ambassadors extraordinary from

Charles to the republic. The session lasted till nine in the evening; when the Bishop of Posnanian finished it by declaring, in the name of the diet, Stanislaus elected King of Poland: they instantly threw up their hats into the air, and the noise of their acclamations drowned the cries of the opposers.

It was of no service to the cardinal primate, or to those who were willing to remain neuter, to absent themselves from the election; they were obliged the next day to attend and perform homage to their new king. He received them as if he had been perfectly satisfied with their conduct; but the greatest mortification they underwent, was that of being compelled to follow him to the quarters of the King of Sweden. To the sovereign he had just made, Charles paid all the honors due to a King of Poland; and to give a greater weight to his new dignity, he supplied him with both money and troops.

Charles XII. departed immediately from Warsaw to finish the conquest of Poland. He had ordered his army to rendezvous before Leopold, the capital of the Great Palatinate of Russia, a place important in itself, and still more so by the riches with which it was filled. It was imagined that it would have held out fifteen days, on account of the fortifications which Augustus had built there. The conqueror sat down before it on the 5th of September, and the next day took it by assault. All who dared to resist were put to the sword. The troops, victorious and masters of the town, did not separate themselves to run to pillage, notwithstanding

ing the great treasures which were in Leopold. They arranged themselves in order of battle in the great square. There, those who remained in the garrison came and surrendered themselves prisoners of war. The king caused it to be published by the sound of trumpet that all those inhabitants who had any effects belonging to Augustus or his adherents should bring them to him before the close of the day, on pain of death. The measures were so well taken that few dared to disobey; and four hundred chests, filled with gold and silver coin, plate and other valuable things, were brought to the king.

The beginning of the reign of Stanislaus was distinguished almost at the same time by an event widely different. Some affairs which absolutely demanded his presence, had obliged him to remain at Warsaw. He had with him his mother, his wife and two daughters. In this confusion he had nearly lost his second daughter, who was but one year old. She had been carried away by her nurse, who had lost her way, and he found her in the manger of a stable in a neighboring village, where she had been abandoned. It was this very infant whom Fate, after still greater vicissitudes, elevated to be Queen of France.

The cardinal primate, the Bishop of Posnania, and some grandees of Poland, composed his new court. It was guarded by six thousand Poles of the army of the crown, who had lately entered into his service, but whose fidelity had not as yet been proved. General Hoorn, governor of the

town, had not more than fifteen hundred Swedes with him. There was a profound tranquillity at Warsaw, and Stanislaus proposed to depart in a few days for the conquest of Leopold; when, all of a sudden, he was informed that a numerous army was approaching the town. It was King Augustus, who, by a new effort, and one of the most skilful marches that ever general made, had deceived the King of Sweden, and was coming with twenty thousand men to fall upon Warsaw, and to carry off his rival.

Warsaw was very ill fortified; the Polish troops who were to defend it were not to be relied on; and as Augustus had spies in the town, Stanislaus must have perished had he remained. He accordingly sent back his family into Posnania, under a guard of Polish troops, such as he had most confidence in. The cardinal primate fled among the first to the frontiers of Prussia; many of the nobles took different roads. As for the new king, he immediately set out to find Charles XII., thus learning at an early period to suffer disgrace, and forced to quit the capital, of which he had been but six weeks before elected sovereign. The Bishop of Posnania was the only person who could not escape; he was confined by a dangerous illness in Warsaw. Part of the six thousand Poles followed Stanislaus, the rest escorted his family. Those whose fidelity it was not judged prudent to expose to the temptation of returning to the service of Augustus, were sent into Posnania. As for General Hoorn, who was governor



of Warsaw for the King of Sweden, he remained with his fifteen hundred Swedes in the castle.

Augustus entered into his capital as a sovereign irritated and triumphant. The inhabitants, who had already been laid under contribution by the King of Sweden, were still more hardly treated by Augustus. The cardinal's palace, and all the houses of the confederate lords, with all their wealth, both in town and country, were given to pillage. What created most surprise in this sudden revolution was, that the pope's nuncio, who came with King Augustus, demanded, in the name of his master, that they should deliver up to him the Bishop of Posnania, as subject to the Church of Rome, in the quality of a bishop, and the favorer of a prince placed on the throne by the arms of a Lutheran.

The court of Rome, which has always striven to augment its temporal by means of its spiritual power, had a long time since established in Poland a kind of jurisdiction, at the head of which was the pope's nuncio. Its ministers never let slip any favorable opportunity to extend their power; a power revered by the multitude, but always opposed by those of more wisdom. They assumed to themselves a right to judge of all ecclesiastical causes; and, in times of trouble, had usurped several other prerogatives, in which they maintained themselves till about the year 1728, when these abuses were corrected; abuses such as are never reformed till they become absolutely intolerable. Augustus, happy in any opportunity of

punishing the Bishop of Posnania with propriety, and at the same time desirous to please the court of Rome (against which at any other time he would have exerted himself), delivered the Polish prelate into the hands of the nuncio. The bishop, after seeing his house pillaged, was carried by the soldiers to the house of the Italian minister, and from thence sent into Saxony, where he died. Count de Hoorn sustained the continual fire of the enemy in the castle, where he was shut up, but when he was no longer able to hold out, he then surrendered himself prisoner of war, together with his fifteen hundred Swedes. This was the first advantage that Augustus obtained over his victorious enemy during the torrent of his bad fortune.

This last effort was the blaze of a fire that was just going out. His troops, which were assembled in haste, consisted of Poles, ready to abandon him on the first misfortune;—Saxon recruits, who had never till then seen anything of war;—vagabond Cossacks, more fit to plunder the conquered than to conquer; and all of them trembling at the very name of the King of Sweden.

That conqueror, accompanied by King Stanislaus, went to seek his enemy, at the head of his choicest troops. The Saxon army fled everywhere before him. The towns for thirty miles around sent him their keys; nor was there a day which was not signalized by some advantage. Success became too familiar to Charles. He said, "It was rather going to hunt than going to war," and complained that his victories cost him so little.

Augustus entrusted the command of his army for some time to Count de Schulembourg, a very able general, but who had need of all his experience at the head of a dispirited army. He studied more to preserve his master's troops, than to conquer. He carried on the war by stratagem; the two kings pushed it with vigor. He stole several marches upon them, took possession of some advantageous posts, and sacrificed part of his cavalry to give his infantry time to make a sure retreat.

After many feints and countermarches he found himself near Punitz, in the palatinate of Posnania, thinking that Stanislaus and the King of Sweden were at fifty leagues' distance from him. He learned, upon his arrival, that the two kings had marched those fifty leagues in nine days, and that they were come to attack him with ten or twelve thousand horse. Schulembourg had but eight thousand foot and a thousand horse. It was necessary to maintain himself against a superior army, against the name of the King of Sweden, and against the natural fear with which so many defeats had naturally inspired the Saxons. He had always maintained, against the opinions of the German generals, that infantry were able to resist cavalry in the open field, even without the assistance of *chevaux de frize*; and he this day made the experiment against a victorious cavalry, commanded by the two kings, and by the choicest of the Swedish generals. He posted himself so advantageously that he could not be surrounded.

The first rank, armed with pikes and fusees, knelt down with one knee upon the ground; and the soldiers, placed closely together, presented to the enemy's horse a kind of rampart pointed with pikes and bayonets; the second rank inclined a little over the shoulders of the first; and the third standing upright, fired at the same time from behind the other two. The Swedes, with their usual impetuosity, pressed down upon the Saxons, who awaited them with firmness: the fire of the fusees, together with the points of the pikes and bayonets, maddened the horses, who began to rear instead of advancing. By these means the Swedes attacked in disorder, and the Saxons defended themselves by keeping their ranks.

If Charles had dismounted his cavalry, Schulembourg's army must have been routed without resource. This was the chief apprehension of that general, who expected that his enemy would take this resolution every moment; but neither the King of Sweden, who had so often put in practice all the stratagems of war, nor any of his generals, conceived this idea. This unequal combat of a body of cavalry against infantry, continued with frequent interruptions and repeated attacks nearly three hours. The Swedes lost more horses than men. Schulembourg gave ground at last, but his troops were not broken. He formed them into an oblong square; and though he was wounded in five places, he, in this form, maintained an orderly retreat, in the middle of the night, into the little town of Gurau, about three leagues from the field

of battle. But he had scarcely begun to breathe in this place, when the two kings suddenly appeared after him.

In marching towards the river Oder, the Saxon general saved his fatigued infantry by leading them through a thick wood beyond Gurau. The Swedes, without hesitation, pursued them through the wood, advancing with difficulty through paths scarcely passable by foot-travellers. The Saxons had not crossed the wood above five hours before the Swedish cavalry. On the other side of this wood runs the river Parts, at the foot of a village named Rutsen. Schulembourg had sent to have boats collected immediately for carrying over his troops, but half of them were destroyed. Charles arrived at the time that Schulembourg had reached the opposite shore. Never did a conqueror pursue his enemy so vigorously. The reputation of Schulembourg depended upon his escaping from the King of Sweden: the King of Sweden, on *his* part, imagined his dependent on capturing Schulembourg, and the remains of his army. He lost no time; but made his cavalry swim over. The Saxons found themselves shut up between this river of Parts and the great river of the Oder, which takes its source in Silesia, and is very deep and rapid at this place.

The destruction of Schulembourg seemed inevitable; he attempted, however, to extricate himself from this extremity by one of those master-strokes which are equivalent to victories, and which are so much the more glorious as they are independent of

fortune. He had no more than four thousand men remaining: upon his right was a mill, which he filled with his grenadiers; upon his left, a marsh; a ditch lay before him; and his rear-guard was upon the banks of the Oder. He had no pontoons for passing the river, but, so early as the evening before, he had ordered floats to be prepared. Charles, on the moment of his arrival, attacked the mill; persuaded that as soon as it was taken, the Saxons must either perish in the river or in the field, or that at least they must surrender at discretion, together with their general. However, the floats were ready; the Saxons passed the Oder by favor of the night, and when Charles forced the mill, he found the enemy gone. The two kings expressed their admiration of this retreat, which to this day is spoken of with feelings of pride, and Charles could not prevent himself from saying, "Schulembourg has conquered us to-day." But what covered Schulembourg with honor scarcely proved of any service to Augustus. He once more abandoned Poland to his enemies, and retired into Saxony, where he repaired with precipitation the fortifications of Dresden; being afraid, and not without reason, for the capital of his hereditary dominions.

Charles XII. now beheld Poland reduced to subjection; and his generals, following their king's example, had just defeated in Courland several small bodies of the Muscovites, who, since the great battle of Narva, had only shown themselves in small parties, and made war in those quarters

like the vagabond Tartars, who pillage, fly, and then return only to fly again.

Wherever the Swedes came they imagined themselves sure of a victory, even when they were only twenty to an hundred. At this happy conjuncture Stanislaus prepared for his coronation. Fortune, who had elected him at Warsaw, and who had also driven him thence, again recalled him thither, amidst the acclamations of a crowd of nobility whom the accident of war had attached to him. A diet was there convened, and every obstacle removed; nor were there any but the court of Rome who opposed them.

It was natural for Rome to declare for King Augustus, who from a Protestant had become a Catholic, that he might mount the throne; and against Stanislaus, placed on the same throne by the great enemy of the Catholic religion. Clement XI., at that time pope, sent briefs to every prelate of Poland, and above all to the cardinal primate, by which he threatened excommunication to those who dared to assist at the consecration of Stanislaus, or attempt anything against the rights of King Augustus.

If these briefs were delivered to the bishops who were at Warsaw, it was to be feared that some would obey through weakness, and that the greater part, availing themselves of the circumstance, would render themselves more troublesome, as they were the more necessary. Every precaution was therefore used that the letters of the Pope should not be received in Warsaw. However, a

Franciscan received the briefs secretly, in order that he might deliver them into the prelate's hands. He immediately gave one to the suffragan of Chalm. This prelate, who was strongly attached to Stanislaus, carried it to the king unopened. The king caused the monk to be brought to him, and asked him how he dared to take charge of such a business. The Franciscan replied, that it was by order of his general. Stanislaus desired him, for the future, to mind the orders of his king in preference to those of the general of the Franciscans; and instantly banished him the town.

The same day an order was published by the King of Sweden, forbidding all ecclesiastics then in Warsaw, secular as well as regular, to meddle with the affairs of state under the most grievous penalties. For greater security, he had guards planted at the gates of every prelate, and forbade any stranger to enter the town. He took upon himself these little severities, in order that Stanislaus should not quarrel with the clergy at the time of his accession. He called it relaxation from his military fatigues to stop the intrigues of the Romish court, and that he must fight against it with paper, when he was obliged to attack other sovereigns with real arms.

The cardinal primate was solicited by Charles and Stanislaus to come and perform the ceremony of the coronation. But as he did not imagine himself obliged to quit Dantzic to consecrate a king whose election he did not approve of, and as his



policy was never to do anything without a pretext, he resolved to provide a lawful excuse for his refusal. He therefore caused the Pope's brief to be fixed in the night-time to the gate of his own house. The magistrates of Dantzic, struck with the indignity, made strict search after the offenders, but they were never found. The primate feigned to be irritated, but nevertheless was well satisfied. He had now a pretext for not consecrating the new king; and at the same time kept fair with Charles XII., Augustus, Stanislaus, and the Pope. He died a few days after, leaving his country in a dreadful confusion, and without having gained any advantage by all his intrigues, but that of embroiling himself at once with the three kings, Charles, Augustus, and Stanislaus, with the republic, and with the Pope, who had ordered him to repair to Rome to give an account of his conduct; but as even politicians have sometimes remorse in their last moments, he wrote to King Augustus on his death-bed beseeching his pardon.

The consecration was performed with tranquillity and magnificence on the 4th of October 1705, in the city of Warsaw, notwithstanding the custom which subsists in Poland of crowning the kings at Cracow. Stanislaus Leczinsky and his wife Charlotta Opalinska were consecrated King and Queen of Poland by the hands of the Archbishop of Leopold, assisted by several other prelates. Charles XII. saw the ceremony incognito, the only advantage he reaped from his conquest.

While he was giving a king to the conquered

Poles, while Denmark did not dare to trouble him, while the King of Prussia sought his friendship, and Augustus was withdrawing himself to his hereditary dominions, the Czar was becoming every day more and more formidable. He had but weakly supported Augustus in Poland: but he had made powerful diversions in Ingria.

As for himself, he not only began to be a good soldier, but he likewise taught the art of war to the Muscovites; discipline was established throughout his troops; he had good engineers, an artillery well served, and many good officers: and he likewise knew the great art of maintaining his armies. Some of his generals had learned both how to fight, and, as occasion required, to decline fighting: besides, he had formed a navy capable of making head against the Swedes in the Baltic.

Confiding in all these advantages (entirely acquired by his own genius), and in the absence of the King of Sweden, he took Narva by assault the 21st of August in the year 1704, after a regular siege, and after he had prevented its receiving any succors either by sea or land. The soldiers, once masters of the town, ran to pillage, and abandoned themselves to the most enormous barbarities. The Czar ran on every side to stop the disorder and massacre; he snatched the women from the hands of the soldiers, who, after the utmost violence, were going to cut their throats. He was even obliged to kill with his own hand several Muscovites who would not obey his orders. They show to this day at Narva, in the town-house, the table upon which

he laid his sword as he entered; and they repeat the words with which he addressed the citizens, who were assembled there: "It is not with the blood of the inhabitants that this sword is stained, but with that of the Muscovites, which I have shed to save your lives."

If the Czar had always observed this humanity, he had been the first of men. He aspired to more than to destroy towns: he, at that time, was founding a city not far from Narva, in the middle of his new conquests; this was the city of Petersburg, which he afterwards made his residence, and the centre of commerce. It is situated between Finland and Ingria, in a marshy island, around which the Neva divides itself into several branches, before it falls into the Gulf of Finland: he himself drew the plan of the city, the fortress, and the harbor, the quays which embellish it, and the forts which defend its entrance. This island, uncultivated and desert, which was nothing but a heap of mud during the short summer of those climates, and in the winter a frozen pool, into which there was no entry but through pathless woods and deep morasses, and which had, till then, been the haunt of wolves and bears, was filled in 1703 with above three hundred thousand men, whom the Czar had assembled from his dominions. The peasants of the kingdom of Astracan, and those who inhabit the frontiers of China, were transported to Petersburg. He was obliged to clear forests, to make roads, to drain marshes, and to raise banks, before he could lay the foundation

of the city. Nature was forced in everything. The Czar was resolute in peopling a place which did not appear to be destined for men ; neither the inundations which razed his works, the sterility of the soil, the ignorance of the workmen, nor even the mortality which destroyed two hundred thousand men in the beginning, could make him change his resolution. The town was founded amidst the obstacles which nature, the skill of the people, and an unhappy war, had raised against it. Petersburg had become a city in 1705, and its harbor was filled with ships. The emperor attracted strangers by his beneficence, distributing lands to some, giving houses to others, and welcoming every artist that came to civilize this savage climate. Above all, he had rendered Petersburg inaccessible to the efforts of his enemies. The Swedish generals, who frequently beat his troops in every other quarter, were not able to hurt this infant colony. It was tranquil in the midst of the surrounding war.

The Czar, thus creating to himself new dominions, always held out his hand to Augustus, who was losing his ; he persuaded him by means of General Patkul, who had lately entered into the service of Muscovy, and was then the Czar's ambassador in Saxony, to come to Grodno, to confer with him once more on the unhappy state of his affairs. Augustus came there with some troops, accompanied by General Schulembourg, whose passage over the Oder had rendered him famous through the north, and in whom he placed his last hope. The Czar arrived there also, followed by an army

of seventy thousand men. These two monarchs concerted new plans for carrying on the war. Augustus, being dethroned, was no longer afraid of irritating the Poles by abandoning their country to the Muscovite troops. It was resolved that the army of the Czar should divide itself into several bodies, to stop the King of Sweden at every step. It was at the time of this interview that Augustus renewed the order of the White Eagle; a weak resource to attach to his interest some Polish lords, who were less desirous of real advantages than of an empty honor, which becomes ridiculous when it is held of a prince who has nothing of a king but the name. The conference of the two kings finished in an extraordinary manner. The Czar departed suddenly, and left his troops with his ally, to hasten and crush a rebellion with which he was threatened in Astracan. Scarcely was he gone before Augustus ordered Patkul to be arrested at Dresden. All Europe was surprised that he dared, against the law of nations, and in appearance against his own interest, to throw into prison the ambassador of the only prince who protected him.

The secret spring of this transaction, as a son of King Augustus did me the honor to tell me, was as follows: Patkul, proscribed in Sweden for having defended the privileges of Livonia, his native country, had been general to Augustus; but his high and lofty spirit could ill accord with the haughtiness of General Fleming, the favorite of the king, who was more imperious and lofty than himself; he therefore passed into the service of the Czar,

whose general he then was, and his ambassador at the court of Augustus. Possessed with a penetrating genius, he plainly perceived that the views of Fleming and the chancellor of Saxony were to propose a peace at any price to the King of Sweden. He immediately formed a design to prevent them, and to effect an accommodation between the Czar and Sweden. The chancellor discovered his project, and obtained leave to seize his person. King Augustus told the Czar that he was a traitor who betrayed them both. He was, however, no farther culpable than in having served his new master too well; but an ill-timed service frequently meets with the punishment due to treason.

In the meantime, on one side, the seventy thousand Russians, divided into several small bodies, were burning and ravaging the lands of Stanislaus' adherents; while, on the other, Schulembourg was advancing with fresh troops. The good fortune of the Swedes dispersed these two armies in less than two months. Charles XII. and Stanislaus attacked the separate bodies of the Muscovites, one after the other, with such spirit, that one Muscovite general was beaten before he heard of the defeat of his companion.

No obstacle could stop the conqueror. If he found a river between him and the enemy, Charles and his Swedes swam across it. A party of Swedes took the baggage of Augustus, in which were two hundred thousand crowns of silver coined. Stanislaus seized eight hundred thousand ducats belonging to Prince Menzikoff, the Musco-

vite general. Charles, at the head of his cavalry, marched thirty leagues in twenty-four hours; every soldier leading a horse in his hand, to mount when his own was weary. The Muscovites, terrified, and reduced to a small number, fled in disorder, beyond the Dnieper.

While Charles was driving the Muscovites before him, even into the very heart of Livonia, Schulembourg repassed the Oder, and came at the head of twenty thousand men to give battle to the Grand Marshal Renschild, who was esteemed Charles XII.'s best general, and called the *Parmenio* of this Alexander of the north. These two illustrious generals, who seemed to participate in the destiny of their masters, encountered each other near Punitz, at a place called *Frauenstad*, a spot already fatal to the troops of Augustus. Renschild had but thirteen battalions, and twenty-two squadrons, which made in all about ten thousand men. Schulembourg had double that number. It is remarkable that he had in his army a body of six or seven thousand Muscovites who had been long disciplined in Saxony, and were looked upon as veteran troops, who united the ferocity of the Muscovites to the German discipline. The battle of *Frauenstad* was fought the 12th of February, 1706; but this very General Schulembourg, who, with four thousand men, had in some measure baffled the fortune of the King of Sweden, sunk under that of General Renschild. The combat did not last a quarter of an hour. The Saxons did not resist a moment; and the Muscovites threw down their

arms as soon as they saw the Swedes. The panic was so sudden, and the disorder so great, that the conquerors found on the field of battle seven thousand loaded fusees which the enemy had thrown down without firing. Never was defeat more sudden, more complete, or more disgraceful; and yet no general ever made a finer disposition than Schuembourg, even in the opinion of the Swedish generals, as well as of the Saxons, who saw in this day how little human prudence is mistress of events.

Among the prisoners they found an entire regiment of French. These unfortunate men had been taken by the Saxon troops in 1704, at the famous battle of Hochstet, so fatal to the grandeur of Louis XIV. They had entered since that into the service of King Augustus, who had formed them into a regiment of dragoons, and had given the command to a Frenchman of the house of Joyeuse. The colonel was killed at the first, or rather the only, charge of the Swedes, and the whole regiment were made prisoners of war. The same day these Frenchmen begged to serve Charles XII., and they were accordingly received into his service by a singular destiny, which reserved them once more to change their conqueror into their master.

With regard to the Muscovites, they begged their lives on their knees, but were inhumanly massacred about six hours after the combat, to revenge the violences offered by their countrymen, and also that the Swedes might get rid of prisoners whom they knew not how to dispose of.

The king heard of this fresh victory upon his



return from Lithuania; but the satisfaction he received from it was disturbed by a small degree of jealousy. He could not prevent himself from saying, "This is the last time that Renschild shall be compared with me."

Augustus now saw himself without resources; he had no place left him but Cracow, in which he was shut up with two regiments of Muscovites, two of Saxons, and some troops of the army of the crown, by whom he was even afraid of being delivered up to the conqueror; but his ruin was complete when he learned that Charles XII. had at last entered into Saxony on the 1st September, 1706.

He had marched through Silesia even without deigning to apprise the court of Vienna. Germany was alarmed. The diet of Ratisbon, which represents the empire, but whose resolutions are often as ineffectual as solemn, declared the King of Sweden an enemy to the empire if he passed the Oder with his army; which circumstance determined him to march the sooner into Germany.

At his approach the villages were deserted, and the inhabitants fled on every side. Charles behaved here as at Copenhagen. He caused it everywhere to be published that he was only come to give them peace, and that all those who would return home, and pay the contributions he demanded, should be treated as his proper subjects, but that the rest should be pursued without quarter. This declaration, from a king who was never known to break his word, made those return in crowds who before had fled from fear. He

pitched his camp at Altranstad, near the plain of Lutzen, a field famous for the victory and death of Gustavus Adolphus. He went to see the place where that great man was killed. When they had conducted him to the spot, he said, "I have endeavored to live like him; God will grant me one day, perhaps, a death as glorious."

He sent orders from the camp to the states of Saxony to assemble, and transmit to him without delay the registers of the electoral finances. As soon as he had them in his power, and was informed justly of what Saxony was able to furnish, he taxed it at six hundred and twenty-five thousand rix-dollars a month. Besides this contribution, the Saxons were obliged to furnish every Swedish soldier with two pounds of flesh, two pounds of bread, two pots of beer, and four sols a day, together with forage for their horses. The contributions thus regulated, the king established a new police to protect the Saxons from the insults of his own soldiers. He ordered that in every town where he placed garrisons, the innkeepers who quartered his soldiers should give certificates every month of their conduct, in default of which the soldier was not to have his pay. Besides this, inspectors went every fifteen days from house to house to inform themselves whether the Swedes had committed any outrage; and they were likewise authorized to indemnify the innkeeper, and punish the offender.

It is well known under what severe discipline the troops of Charles XII. were kept; that they

never pillaged towns taken by assault before they received permission; that they even plundered in a regular manner, and left off at the first signal. The Swedes boast to this day of the discipline which they observed in Saxony, while the Saxons complain of the terrible outrages they committed; contradictions which it would be impossible to reconcile were it not known how differently different men behold the same object. It was scarcely possible but that the conquerors would sometimes abuse their rights, as the conquered would take the slightest injuries for the most enormous outrages. One day as the king was riding near Leipsic, a Saxon peasant came and threw himself at his feet, beseeching him to grant him justice on a grenadier who had just taken from him what was designed for his family's dinner. The king immediately caused the soldier to be brought to him, and asked him with a stern countenance, "Is it true that you have robbed this man?" "Sire," said the soldier, "I have not done him so much injury as you have done his master. You have taken from him a kingdom; I have taken from this fellow nothing but a turkey." The king gave the peasant ten ducats with his own hand, and pardoned the soldier for the wit and boldness of his reply, saying to him, "Remember, friend, that if I have taken a kingdom from Augustus, I have kept nothing to myself."

The great fair of Leipsic was held as usual; the merchants coming there in perfect security; they saw not one Swedish soldier in the fair. One

would have said that the army of the King of Sweden was in Saxony only to preserve the safety of the country. He commanded throughout the electorate with a power as absolute, and a tranquillity as profound, as he did in Stockholm.

King Augustus wandering in Poland, deprived at once of his kingdom and electorate, at last wrote a letter with his own hand to Charles XII., begging him to grant a peace. He secretly charged the Baron D'Imhoff, in conjunction with M. Fingstein, referendary of the privy council, to carry this letter; and gave them both full powers, and a blank signed: "Go," said he to them, "endeavor to obtain for me reasonable and Christian conditions." He was reduced to the necessity of concealing those overtures and to decline the open mediation of any prince; for, being then in Poland, at the mercy of the Muscovites, he had reason to fear that that dangerous ally, whom he was now going to abandon, would take vengeance on him for his submission to the conqueror. His two plenipotentiaries came to Charles's camp in the night, and had a private audience. The king, having read the letter, told them they should have his answer immediately; and accordingly retiring to his closet, he wrote as follows:—

"I consent to give peace on the following conditions, in which it must not be expected that I ever will make the least alteration.

I. "That Augustus renounce for ever the crown of Poland; that he acknowledge Stanislaus as law-

ful king; and that he promise never to think of remounting the throne, not even after the death of Stanislaus.

II. "That he cancel all other treaties, particularly those he has made with the Muscovites.

III. "That he honorably send back to my camp the Princes Sobiesky, with the other prisoners whom he has taken.

IV. "That he deliver up all the deserters who have entered into his service, particularly John Patkul; and that he stop all proceedings against such as have deserted from his service and entered into mine."

This written answer he gave to Count Piper, with orders to settle the particulars with the plenipotentiaries of Augustus. These gentlemen were shocked at the severity of the proposals, and used all the little arts that men without power can employ, to mitigate, if possible, the rigor of the king. They had several conferences with Count Piper; but that minister answered all their arguments with this short reply: "Such is the will of the king, my master, and he never changes his resolution."

While these negotiations were carrying on in Saxony, fortune seemed to put Augustus in a condition to obtain more honorable terms, and to treat with his conqueror on a more equal footing.

Prince Menzikoff, generalissimo of the Muscovites, entered Poland with a body of thirty thousand men, at a time when Augustus not only did

not desire their assistance, but even dreaded it. He had only with him some Polish and Saxon troops, making in all about six thousand men. With so small a body of troops, surrounded by the army of Prince Menzikoff, he had everything to fear in case the negotiation should be discovered. He saw himself at once dethroned by his enemy, and in danger of being taken prisoner by his ally. In this delicate crisis, one of the Swedish generals, named Meyerfield, at the head of ten thousand men, appeared at Calish, near the palatinate of Posnania. Prince Menzikoff pressed Augustus to give them battle; but as he was greatly embarrassed, he delayed the engagement under various pretexts; for, though the enemy had but one-third of his number, there were four thousand Swedes in Meyerfield's army, and that alone was sufficient to render the event doubtful. To attack the Swedes during the negotiation, and to lose the battle, was, in effect, to deepen the abyss in which he was already plunged. He resolved, therefore, to send a trusty servant to the general of the enemy, in order to give him some distant hints of the peace, and advise him to retreat. But this advice produced an effect contrary to what he expected. General Meyerfield thought they were laying a snare to intimidate him; and for that reason resolved to hazard the battle.

The Russians now, for the first time, conquered the Swedes in a pitched battle. This victory, which Augustus gained almost against his will, was entire and complete. In the midst of his bad fortune, he

entered triumphant into Warsaw, formerly his flourishing capital, but then a dismantled and ruined town, ready to receive any conqueror, and to acknowledge the strongest for king. He was tempted to seize upon this moment of prosperity to go with the Muscovite army to attack the King of Sweden in Saxony. But when he reflected that Charles XII. was at the head of an army hitherto invincible; that the Russians would abandon him on the first intelligence of the treaty he had begun; that his Saxon dominions already drained of men and money, would be equally ravaged by the Swedes and Muscovites; that the empire, engaged in a war with France, could afford him no assistance; and that, in the end, he should be left without dominions, money or friends, he thought it most advisable to comply with the terms the King of Sweden should impose. These became still more severe, when Charles heard that Augustus had attacked his troops during the negotiation. His resentment, and the pleasure of further humbling an enemy who had just vanquished his forces, made him inflexible upon all the articles of the treaty. Thus the victory of Augustus served only to render his situation the more miserable, a circumstance which perhaps never happened to any one but himself.

He had just caused *Te Deum* to be sung at Warsaw, when Fingstein, one of his plenipotentiaries, arrived from Saxony with the treaty of peace which deprived him of his crown. Augustus hesitated for a while, but at length signed it; and set out

for Saxony, vainly hoping that his presence would soften the King of Sweden, and that his enemy would perhaps remember the ancient alliance of their families, and the affinity of blood that ran in their veins.

The two princes met, for the first time, without ceremony, in Count Piper's tent, at a place called Gutersdorf. Charles was, as usual, in his jack-boots, with a piece of black taffety tied round his neck instead of a cravat; his clothes of coarse blue cloth, with gilt brass buttons. He had a long sword by his side, which had served him in the battle of Narva, and on the pommel of which he frequently leaned. The conversation turned wholly upon these jack-boots, Charles telling Augustus that he had not laid them aside for six years, except when he went to bed. These trifles were the only subject of discourse between two kings, one of whom had just deprived the other of his crown. Augustus, especially, spoke with an air of complacency and satisfaction, which princes and men accustomed to the management of great affairs know how to assume amidst the most cruel mortifications. The two kings dined together twice. Charles always affected to give Augustus the right hand; but, far from mitigating the rigor of his demands, he rendered them still more severe. It was, doubtless, a very mortifying thing for a sovereign to be forced to deliver up a general officer and a public minister. It was still a greater debasement to be obliged to send the jewels and archives of the crown to his successor Stanislaus. But



what completed his degradation was his being at last compelled to congratulate, on his accession to the throne, the man who was going to usurp his place. Charles required Augustus to write a letter to Stanislaus. The dethroned king endeavored to evade the demand; but Charles insisted upon his writing the letter, and he was obliged to comply. Here follows an exact transcript of it, which I have seen. It is copied from the original, which is still in the possession of King Stanislaus :

“SIR AND BROTHER :

“We little imagined it would have been necessary to enter into a literary correspondence with your Majesty; nevertheless, in order to please His Majesty of Sweden, and to avoid the suspicion of our being unwilling to gratify his desire, we hereby congratulate you on your accession to the throne, and wish you may find in your native country more faithful subjects than we have left there. All the world will do us the justice to believe that we have received nothing but the most ungrateful returns for our good offices, and that the greater part of our subjects seemed to have no other aim than to hasten our ruin. Wishing that you may never be exposed to the like misfortunes, we commit you to the protection of God.

“Your brother and neighbor,

DRESDEN,

“AUGUSTUS, KING.”

April 8, 1707.

Augustus was obliged to give orders to all his magistrates no longer to style him King of Poland,

and to erase this title, which he now renounced, from the public prayers. He was less averse to the release of the Sobieskies. These princes upon quitting their prison refused to see him; but the sacrifice of Patkul was the severest of all. The Czar of Muscovy, on the one hand, loudly demanded him back as his ambassador; and on the other, the King of Sweden, with the most terrible menaces in case of refusal, insisted that he should be delivered up to him. Patkul was then confined in the castle of Konigstein, in Saxony. Augustus thought he might easily gratify Charles XII. and save his own honor. He sent his guards to deliver this unhappy man to the Swedish troops; but he previously despatched a secret order to the governor of Konigstein to let his prisoner escape. The bad fortune of Patkul defeated the pains that were taken to save him. The governor, knowing that Patkul was very rich, had a mind to make him purchase his liberty. The prisoner, still relying on the law of nations, and informed of the intentions of Augustus, refused to pay for that which he thought he had a title to obtain for nothing. The guards who were commissioned to seize the prisoner, arrived during this interval, and immediately delivered him to four Swedish captains, who carried him forthwith to the general quarters at Altranstad, where he remained for three months fastened to a stake with a heavy iron chain; from whence he was conducted to Casimir.

Charles, forgetting that Patkul was the Czar's ambassador, and considering him only as his own

subject, ordered a council of war to try him with the utmost rigor. He was condemned to be broken alive on the wheel, and then quartered. A chaplain came to inform him of the fatal sentence, without acquainting him with the manner in which it was to be executed. Patkul, who had braved death in so many battles, finding himself alone with a priest, and his courage being no longer supported by pride or passion, the sources of human intrepidity, poured a flood of tears into the chaplain's bosom. He was betrothed to a Saxon lady, called Madam d'Enfiedel, a woman of birth, of merit, and of beauty, whom he expected to have married about the time that he found himself condemned to die. He entreated the chaplain to wait upon her, to give her all the consolation in his power, and to assure her that he died full of the most tender affection for his incomparable mistress. When he was brought to the place of punishment, and beheld the wheel and stakes prepared for his execution, he fell into convulsions, and threw himself into the arms of the minister, who embraced him, covered him with his cloak, and wept over him. A Swedish officer then read aloud a paper to the following effect:—

“This is to declare that it is the express order of his Majesty, our most merciful lord, that this man, who is a traitor to his country, be broke upon the wheel and quartered, in order to atone for his crimes, and to be an example to others, that every one may beware of treason, and faithfully serve his king.” At the words “our most merciful lord,”

Patkul cried out, "What mercy!" and at those of "traitor to his country"—"Alas!" said he, "I have served it but too well." He received sixteen blows, and suffered the most excruciating tortures that can be imagined. Thus died the unfortunate John Reinold Patkul, ambassador and general of the Emperor of Russia.

Those who looked upon him only as a rebel, said that he deserved death; but those who considered him as a Livonian, born in a province that had privileges to defend, and remembered that he had been banished from Livonia for no other reason than his having defended those privileges, called him a martyr to the liberty of his country. It was on all hands agreed, however, that the title of ambassador to the Czar ought to have rendered his person sacred. The King of Sweden alone, educated in the principles of arbitrary power, thought that he had only performed an act of justice, whilst all Europe condemned his cruelty.

The mangled limbs of the sufferer remained exposed upon gibbets till 1713, when Augustus, having regained his throne, caused these testimonies of the necessity to which he had been reduced at Altranstad to be gathered together. They were brought to Warsaw in a box, and delivered to him in presence of the French envoy. The King of Poland, showing the box to this minister, only said, "These are the limbs of Patkul;" without adding anything either to blame his conduct or to bewail his memory, and without any one daring to speak on so delicate and mournful a subject.

About this time a Livonian named Paikel, an officer in the Saxon troops, who had been taken prisoner in the field, was condemned at Stockholm, by a decree of the senate; but his sentence was only to lose his head. This difference of punishments in the same case made it but too plain that Charles, in putting Patkul to such a cruel death, was more anxious to avenge himself than to punish the criminal. Be that as it may, Paikel, after his condemnation, proposed to the senate to impart to the king the secret of making gold, on condition that he should obtain his pardon. He made the experiment in prison, in presence of Colonel Hamilton and the magistrates of the town; and whether he had actually discovered some useful secret, or, which is more probable, had only acquired the art of deceiving with ability, they carried the gold which was found in the crucible to the mint at Stockholm, and gave the senate such a full, and seemingly such an important account of the matter, that the queen-dowager, Charles's grandmother, ordered his execution to be suspended till the king should be informed of this uncommon affair, and send his orders accordingly.

The king made answer, "That as he had refused the pardon of the criminal to the entreaties of his friends, he would never grant to interest what he had denied to friendship." This inflexibility had something in it very heroic in a prince, especially as he thought the secret practicable. Augustus, upon hearing this story, said, "I am not surprised at the King of Sweden's indifference

about the philosopher's stone; he has found it in Saxony."

When the Czar was informed of the strange peace which Augustus had, notwithstanding their former treaties, concluded at Altranstad; and that Patkul, his ambassador plenipotentiary, was delivered up to the King of Sweden, in contempt of the laws of nations; he loudly complained of these indignities to the several courts of Europe. He wrote to the Emperor of Germany, to the Queen of England, and to the States-General of the United Provinces. He applied the terms of "cowardice" and "treachery" to the sad necessity to which Augustus had been obliged to submit. He conjured all these powers to interpose their mediation to procure the restoration of his ambassador, and to prevent the affront which, in his person, was going to be offered to crowned heads. He pressed them, by the motives of honor, not to debase themselves so far as to become guarantees of the treaty of Altranstad; a concession which Charles XII. meant to extort from them by his threatening and imperious behavior. These letters had no other effect than to set the power of the King of Sweden in a stronger light. The Emperor, England, and Holland, were then engaged in a ruinous war with France, and judged it a very unseasonable juncture to exasperate Charles XII. by refusing the vain ceremony of being guarantees to a treaty. With regard to the unhappy Patkul, there was not a single power which interposed its good offices in his behalf; from whence it ap-

pears what little confidence a subject ought to put in princes, and how much all the monarchs in Europe at that time stood in awe of the King of Sweden.

It was proposed in the council of the Czar to retaliate this cruelty on the Swedish officers who were prisoners at Moscow; but the Czar would not consent to a barbarity which would have been attended with fatal consequences, as there were more Muscovites prisoners in Sweden than Swedes in Muscovy.

He studied a more advantageous revenge. The main body of his enemy's army lay inactive in Saxony. Lewenhaupt, general of the King of Sweden, who was left in Poland with about twenty thousand men, was not able to guard the passes into a country without forts and full of factions. Stanislaus was in the camp of Charles. The Emperor of Muscovy seized this opportunity, and re-entered Poland with above sixty thousand men. These he divided into several bodies, and marched with a flying camp to Leopold, where there was no Swedish garrison. All the towns of Poland yield to any one who appears before their gates at the head of an army. He caused an assembly to be convoked at Leopold, of much the same nature as that which had dethroned Augustus at Warsaw.

Poland had at that time two primates as well as two kings; the one nominated by Augustus, the other by Stanislaus. The primate nominated by Augustus summoned the assembly of Leopold, to which they whom that prince had abandoned

by the peace of Altranstad, and such as were bought over by the money of the Czar, immediately repaired. Here it was proposed to elect a new sovereign; so that Poland was upon the point of having three kings at once, without being able to say which was the real one.

During the conferences at Leopold, the Czar, whose interest was closely connected with that of the Emperor of Germany, on account of the common dread which they entertained of the power of the King of Sweden, secretly obtained from him a number of German officers; who, arriving daily, increased his strength in a considerable degree, by bringing with them discipline and experience. These he engaged in his service by several instances of liberality; and the more to encourage his own troops, he gave his picture, set with diamonds, to all the general officers and colonels who had fought at the battle of Calish; the subaltern officers had medals of gold, and every private soldier a medal of silver. These monuments of the victory of Calish were all struck in the new city of Petersburg; where the improvement of the arts kept pace with the desire of glory and spirit of emulation which the Czar had instilled into his troops.

The confusion, the multiplicity of factions, and the continual ravages prevailing in Poland, hindered the diet of Leopold from coming to any resolution. The Czar therefore transferred it to Lublin. But the change of place did not lessen the disorder and perplexity in which the whole nation was involved.



The assembly contented itself with neither acknowledging Augustus, who had abdicated the throne, nor Stanislaus, who had been elected against their will; but they were neither sufficiently united nor resolute to nominate another king. During these fruitless deliberations, the party of the Princes Sapieha, that of Oginsky, those who secretly adhered to Augustus, and the new subjects of Stanislaus, all made war upon one another, plundered each other's estates, and completed the ruin of their country. The Swedish troops, commanded by Lewenhaupt, one part of which lay in Livonia, another in Lithuania, and a third in Poland, were daily in pursuit of the Russians, and set fire to everything that opposed Stanislaus. The Russians ruined their friends and foes without distinction; and nothing was to be seen but towns reduced to ashes, and wandering troops of Poles, deprived of all their substance, and detesting alike their two kings, Charles XII., and the Czar of Muscovy.

In order to quiet these commotions, and to secure the peaceable possession of the throne, Stanislaus set out from Altranstad on the 15th of July 1707, accompanied by General Renschild, with sixteen Swedish regiments, and furnished with a large sum of money. He was acknowledged wherever he came. The discipline of his troops, which made the barbarity of the Muscovites to be more sensibly felt, conciliated the affections of the people. His extreme affability, in proportion as it was better known, reconciled to him almost all the different factions; and his money procured him the greatest

part of the army of the crown. The Czar, apprehensive of wanting provisions in a country which his troops had laid waste, retired into Lithuania, where he had fixed the general rendezvous of his army, and where he resolved to establish magazines. This retreat left Stanislaus the undisturbed sovereign of almost all Poland.

The only person who gave him any uneasiness was Count Siniausky, grand general of the crown by the nomination of Augustus. This man, who was possessed of no contemptible talents, and entertained the most ambitious views, was at the head of a third party. He neither acknowledged Augustus nor Stanislaus; and, after having used his utmost efforts to procure his own election, contented himself with being the head of a third party, since he could not be king. The troops of the crown, which continued under his command, had no other pay but the liberty of pillaging their own country with impunity; and all those who had either suffered, or were apprehensive of suffering, from the rapacity of these freebooters, soon submitted to Stanislaus, whose power was gathering strength every day.

The King of Sweden was then in his camp at Altranstad, receiving ambassadors from almost all the princes in Christendom; some intreating him to quit the empire, others desiring him to turn his arms against the Emperor; and it was then generally reported that he intended to join with France in humbling the house of Austria. Among these ambassadors came the famous John, Duke of Marl-

borough, on the part of Anne, Queen of Great Britain. This man, who never besieged a town which he did not take, nor fought a battle which he did not gain, was at St. James's a perfect courtier, in Parliament the head of a party, and in foreign countries the most able negotiator of his time. He has done France as much mischief by his politics as by his arms. Mr. Fagel, secretary of the States-General, a man of the greatest merit, has been heard to say that when the States-General had more than once resolved to oppose the schemes which the Duke was about to lay before them, the Duke came, spoke to them in French, a language in which he expressed himself but very indifferently, and yet he brought them all over to his opinion. Of the truth of this story Lord Bolingbroke assured me.

In conjunction with Prince Eugene, the companion of his victories, and Heinsius, the grand pensionary of Holland, he supported the whole weight of the war which the allies carried on against France. He knew that Charles was incensed against the empire and the Emperor: that he was secretly solicited by the French; and that if this conqueror should espouse the cause of Louis XIV. the allies must be entirely ruined.

Charles, indeed, had given his word, in 1700, that he would not intermeddle in the quarrel between Louis XIV. and the allies; but the Duke of Marlborough could not believe that any prince would be so great a slave to his word as not to sacrifice it to his grandeur and interest. He therefore

set out from the Hague with a resolution to sound the intentions of the King of Sweden. M. Fabricius, who then attended Charles XII., assured me that the Duke of Marlborough, on his arrival, applied secretly, not to Count Piper, the prime minister, but to Baron de Gortz, who now began to share with Piper the confidence of the King. He even went in this nobleman's carriage to the quarters of Charles XII., where there passed some marks of coldness between the Duke and the Chancellor Piper; by whom, however, being afterwards presented, together with Robinson, the English Minister, he spoke to the king in French. He told him, "that he should esteem it a singular happiness to have an opportunity of learning under his command such parts of the art of war as he did not yet understand." To this polite compliment the king made no return, and seemed to forget that it was Marlborough who was speaking to him. He even thought, as I have been told, that the dress of this great man was too much studied, and that it had too little the air of a soldier. The conversation was tedious and embarrassing, Charles XII. speaking in the Swedish tongue, and Robinson serving as an interpreter. Marlborough, who was never in a haste to make proposals, and who, by a long course of experience, had learned the art of diving into the real characters of men, and discovering the connection between their most secret thoughts and their actions, gestures, and discourse, regarded the king with the utmost attention. When he spoke to him of war in general, he thought he perceived in

his Majesty a natural aversion to France, and remarked that he talked with pleasure of the conquest of the allies. He mentioned the Czar to him, and observed that his eyes always kindled at the name, notwithstanding the calmness of the conversation. He remarked, besides, a map of Russia lying before him upon the table. He wanted no more to convince him that the real design and sole ambition of the King of Sweden was to dethrone the Czar, as he had done the King of Poland. He was sensible that if Charles remained in Saxony, it was only to impose some hard conditions on the Emperor of Germany. He knew the Emperor could make no resistance, and that thus all disputes would be easily accommodated. He left Charles, therefore, to follow the bent of his own mind; and, satisfied with having discovered his intentions, made him no proposals. These particulars I had from the Duchess of Marlborough, his widow.

As few negotiations are finished without money, and as ministers are sometimes known to sell the hatred or favor of their masters, it was the general opinion throughout Europe that the Duke of Marlborough would not have succeeded so well with the King of Sweden had he not made a handsome present to Count Piper, whose memory still labors under the imputation. For my own part, after having traced this report to its source, with all the care and accuracy of which I am master, I found that Piper received a small present from the Emperor, by the hands of the Count de Wratissau, with the consent of his master, but nothing from the

Duke of Marlborough. Certain it is, Charles was so firmly resolved to dethrone the Emperor of Russia that he asked nobody's advice on that subject, nor wanted the instigation of Count Piper to prompt him to wreak his long-meditated vengeance on the head of Peter Alexiowitz.

But what fully justifies the character of that minister was the honor which, long after this period, was paid to his memory by Charles XII., who, having heard that Piper was dead in Russia, caused his body to be transported to Stockholm, and gave him a magnificent funeral at his own expense.

The king, who had not as yet experienced any reverse of fortune, nor even met with any interruption in his victories, thought one year would be sufficient for dethroning the Czar; after which, he imagined he might return and set himself up as the arbiter of Europe. But, first of all, he resolved to humble the Emperor of Germany.

Baron de Strahlenheim, the Swedish envoy at Vienna, had quarrelled at a public entertainment with the Count de Zobor, chamberlain of the emperor. The latter having refused to drink the health of Charles XII., and having declared that that prince had used his master very ill, Strahlenheim gave him at once the lie and a box on the ear, and, besides this insult, boldly demanded a reparation from the imperial court. The fear of displeasing the King of Sweden obliged the emperor to banish his chamberlain, whom he ought rather to have avenged. Charles was not satisfied with this

condescension, but insisted that Count Zobor should be delivered up to him. The pride of the court of Vienna was forced to stoop. The count was put into the hands of the king, who sent him back, after having detained him some time a prisoner at Stettin. He likewise further demanded, contrary to the law of nations, that they should deliver up to him fifteen hundred unhappy Muscovites, who, having escaped the fury of his arms, had fled into the imperial territories. The emperor was obliged to yield even to this strange demand; and, had not the Russian envoy at Vienna dexterously given these unhappy wretches an opportunity of escaping by different roads, they must have been delivered into the hands of their enemies.

The third and last of his demands was the most extraordinary. He declared himself the protector of the emperor's Protestant subjects in Silesia, a province belonging to the House of Austria, not to the empire. He insisted that the emperor should grant them the liberties and privileges which had been established by the treaties of Westphalia, but which were extinguished, or at least eluded, by those of Ryswick. The emperor, who wanted only to get rid of such a dangerous neighbor, yielded once more, and granted all he desired. The Lutherans of Silesia had above a hundred churches, which the Catholics were obliged to cede to them by this treaty: but of many of these advantages which were now procured for them by the King of Sweden's good fortune, they were afterwards deprived, when that prince was no longer in a condition to impose laws.

The emperor who made these forced concessions, and complied in everything with the will of Charles XII., was Joseph, the eldest son of Leopold, and brother to Charles VI., who succeeded him. The Pope's inter-nuncio, who then resided at the court of Joseph, reproached him in very severe terms, alleging that it was a most shameful condescension for a Catholic emperor, like him, to sacrifice the interest of his own religion to that of heretics. "You may think yourself very happy," replied the emperor, with a smile, "that the King of Sweden did not propose to make me become a Lutheran; for if he had, I do not know what I should have done."

The Count de Wratissau, his ambassador with Charles XII., brought to Leipsic the treaty in favor of the Silesians, signed with his master's hand; upon which Charles said he was the emperor's best friend. He was far from being pleased, however, that the court of Rome should have employed all its arts and intrigues in order to traverse his scheme. He looked with the utmost contempt upon the weakness of that court; which, having one-half of Europe for its irreconcilable enemy, and placing no confidence in the other, can only support its credit by the finesse of its negotiations; and yet he resolved to be revenged on his holiness. He told the Count de Wratissau that "the Swedes had formerly subdued Rome, and had not degenerated like her." He informed the Pope "that he would one day re-demand the effects which Queen Christina had left at Rome;" and it is hard to say



how far this young conqueror would have carried his resentment and his arms had fortune favored his design. At that time nothing appeared impossible to him. He had even sent several officers privately into Asia and Egypt to take plans of the towns, and to examine into the strength of these countries. Certain it is, that if any one had been able to overturn the empire of the Turks and Persians, and afterwards to pass into Italy, it was Charles XII. He was as young as Alexander, as brave, as enterprising, more indefatigable, more robust, and more virtuous; the Swedes also were perhaps better soldiers than the Macedonians. But such projects, which are called providential when they succeed, are regarded only as chimerical when they fail of success.

At length having removed every difficulty, and accomplished all his designs; having humbled the emperor, given laws in the empire, protected the Lutheran religion in the midst of the Catholics, dethroned one king and crowned another, and rendered himself the terror of all the princes around him, he began to prepare for his departure. The pleasures of Saxony, where he had remained inactive for a whole year, had not made the least alteration in his manner of living. He rode out thrice a day, rose at four in the morning, dressed himself with his own hands, drank no wine, sat at table only a quarter of an hour, exercised his troops every day, and knew no other pleasure but that of making Europe tremble.

The Swedes were still ignorant whither their

king intended to lead them. They had only a suspicion that he meant to go to Moscow. A few days before his departure he ordered the quartermaster-general to give him in writing the route from Leipsic. At that word he paused a moment; and, lest the quartermaster should discover his project, he added, with a smile, to all the capital cities of Europe. The quartermaster brought him a list of all these routes, at the head of which he placed, in great letters, "The route from Leipsic to Stockholm." The majority of Swedes were extremely desirous of returning home; but the king was far from intending to lead them back to their native country. "Mr. Quartermaster," said he, "I see plainly whither you would lead me; but we shall not return to Stockholm so soon."

The army was already on its march, and was passing by Dresden, when Charles, who was at the head of his men, always riding, as usual, two or three hundred paces before his guards, all of a sudden vanished from their sight. Some officers advanced at full gallop to see where he was. They ran to all parts, but could not find him. In a moment the alarm was spread over the whole army. The troops were ordered to halt; the generals assembled together, and were already in the utmost consternation. At length they learned from a Saxon, who was passing by, what was become of the king.

As he was passing so near Dresden, he took it into his head to pay a visit to Augustus. He entered the town on horseback, followed by three

or four general officers. The sentries at the gates asked them their names. Charles said his name was Carl, and that he was a Draban; and all the rest took fictitious names. Count Fleming, seeing them pass through the town, had only time to run and inform his master. All that could possibly be done on such an occasion immediately presented itself to the mind of that minister, who suggested it to Augustus. But Charles entered the chamber in his boots, before Augustus had time to recover from his surprise. Augustus was then sick, and in his nightgown; but dressed himself in haste. Charles breakfasted with him, as a traveller who comes to take leave of his friend; and then expressed a desire to view the fortifications. During the short time he spent in walking round them, a Livonian, who had been condemned in Sweden, and now served in the Saxon army, imagining that he could never find a more favorable opportunity of obtaining his pardon, entreated Augustus to ask it of Charles; persuading himself that his majesty would not refuse so small a favor to a sovereign from whom he had taken a crown, and in whose power he now seemed to be. Augustus readily undertook to make the request. He was then at some distance from the king, and was conversing with Hord, a Swedish general. "I believe," said he, smiling, "your master will not refuse me." "You do not know him," replied General Hord; "he is more likely to refuse you here than anywhere else." Augustus, however, did not fail to prefer the petition in very

pressing terms; and Charles refused it in such a manner as to prevent a repetition of the request. After having passed some hours in this strange visit, he embraced Augustus and departed. Upon rejoining his army, he found all his generals still in consternation. They told him they had determined to besiege Dresden if his majesty had been detained prisoner. "Right," said the king, "but they durst not." Next day, upon hearing the news that Augustus held an extraordinary council at Dresden, "You will find," said Baron Stralenheim, "they are deliberating upon what they should have done yesterday." A few days after, Renschild, coming to wait upon the king, expressed his surprise at this unaccountable visit to Augustus. "I confided," said Charles, "in my good fortune but I have seen the moment that might have been disastrous to me. Fleming had no mind that I should leave Dresden so soon."

## BOOK IV.

Charles leaves Saxony—Pursues the Czar—Penetrates into the Ukraine—Is wounded—Defeat at the Battle of Pultowa—Disastrous consequences of that Battle—Destruction of the Swedish Army, and Flight of Charles into Turkey.

CHARLES at length took leave of Saxony, in September, 1707, at the head of an army of forty-three thousand men, formerly covered with steel, but now shining with gold and silver, and enriched by the spoils of Poland and Saxony; every soldier carrying with him fifty crowns in ready money. The regiments were not only complete, but every company had several supernumeraries who waited for vacancies. Besides this army, Count Lewenhaupt, one of his best generals, waited for him in Poland with twenty thousand men. He had also another army of fifteen thousand in Finland; and fresh recruits were coming to him from Sweden. With all these forces, it was not doubted that he would dethrone the Czar.

That emperor was at that time in Lithuania,

endeavoring to reanimate a party which Augustus appeared to have abandoned. His troops, divided into several bodies, fled on all sides at the first news of the King of Sweden's approach. He had himself enjoined his generals never to await this conqueror with unequal forces; and he was accordingly obeyed.

The King of Sweden, in the midst of his victorious march, received an ambassador on the part of the Turk. This ambassador had his audience in the tent of Count Piper, in which all visits of ceremony were received. On these occasions, this minister supported the dignity of his master by the appearance of a little magnificence, while the king, who was always worse lodged, worse served, and more plainly dressed, than the meanest officer in his army, used to say that his palace was at Count Piper's. The Turkish ambassador presented Charles with a hundred Swedish soldiers, who, having been taken by the Calmucks, and sold in Turkey, had been purchased by the Grand Seignior, who had sent them back to the king, as the most acceptable present he could make him. Not that the Ottoman pride deigned to pay homage to the glory of Charles XII., but because the Sultan, being the natural enemy of the Emperors of Russia and Germany, was desirous to fortify himself against them by the friendship of Sweden, and the alliance of Poland. The ambassador complimented Stanislaus upon his succession to the throne; so that this king was in a short space of time acknowledged by Germany, France, England, Spain, and Turkey. There

remained only the Pope, who deferred the acknowledgment till time should have settled on his head a crown, of which an unlucky accident might deprive him.

Charles had scarce given audience to the Turkish ambassador, before he went in pursuit of the Muscovites. The Russians had quitted Poland and returned to it above twenty different times during the course of the war. Their country, which is open on all sides, and has no fortresses to cut off the retreat of an army, gave the soldiers an opportunity of often revisiting the very spot where they had formerly been vanquished, and even of penetrating as far into the heart of the kingdom as the vanquisher. During Charles's stay in Saxony, the Czar had advanced as far as Leopold, situated at the southern extremity of Poland; but he was at this time at Grodno in Lithuania, a hundred leagues from Leopold.

Charles left Stanislaus in Poland to defend his new kingdom, with the assistance of ten thousand Swedes and his own subjects, against his foreign and domestic enemies; while he put himself at the head of his cavalry, and marched, amidst frost and snow, to Grodno, in the month of January, 1708.

He had passed the Niemen, about two leagues from the town, before the Czar knew anything of his march. Upon the first news of the arrival of the Swedish army, however, the Czar quitted the town by the north gate, and Charles entered it by the south; having only six hundred of his

guards with him, the rest not being able to keep pace with him. The Czar fled with above two thousand men, apprehending that a whole army was entering Grodno. But being informed the same day by a Polish deserter that he had abandoned the place to no more than six hundred men, and that the main body of the army was still five leagues distant, he lost no time in detaching fifteen hundred horse of his own troops, in the evening, to surprise the King of Sweden in the town. This detachment, under favor of the darkness, arrived undiscovered at the first Swedish guard, which, though consisting only of thirty men, sustained for a short time the efforts of the whole fifteen hundred. The king, who was at the other end of the town, flew to their assistance with the rest of his six hundred guards; upon which the Russians fled with precipitation. His army was not long in joining him, when he set out in pursuit of the enemy. All the Russian troops dispersed through Lithuania retired hastily to the eastward, into the palatinate of Minsk, near the frontiers of Muscovy,—their general rendezvous. The Swedes, whom the king had likewise divided into several bodies, continued to pursue the enemy for more than thirty leagues. Both the pursued and the pursuers made forced marches almost every day, though in the middle of winter. Indeed, all seasons of the year had long become indifferent to the soldiers both of Charles and the Czar; the terror struck by the name of King Charles now making the only difference between the Russians and the Swedes.



From Grodno to the Borysthenes (Dnieper) eastward, is a country of morasses, deserts, and immense forests. Even in the cultivated spots there are no provisions to be had, the peasants burying their grain, and whatever else can be so preserved, under ground. These subterraneous stores were discoverable only by boring the earth with iron augurs, the Muscovites and the Swedes alternately making use of these provisions; but they were not always to be found, and even then were not sufficient.

The King of Sweden, who had foreseen these difficulties, had provided biscuit for the subsistence of his army, so that nothing could stop his march. After having traversed the forest of Minsk, where he was constantly obliged to cut down the trees to clear the road for his troops and baggage, he found himself, on the 25th of June 1708, on the banks of the river Berezina, opposite to Borissov.

The Czar had in this place assembled the best part of his forces, and intrenched himself to great advantage; his design being to hinder the Swedes from crossing the river. Charles posted some regiments on the banks of the Berezina, over against Borissov, as if he meant to attempt a passage in the face of the enemy. At the same time, marching his army three leagues higher up the river, he threw a bridge across it, cut his way through a body of three thousand men, who defended that pass, and, without halting, marched on towards the main body of the enemy. The Russians did not wait his approach, but decamped and retreated

towards the Dnieper, breaking up the roads and destroying everything in their way, in order to retard the pursuit of the Swedes.

Charles surmounted all these obstacles, and advanced towards the river Dnieper. He was opposed in his march by twenty thousand Muscovites, entrenched at a place called Hollosin, behind a morass, which could not be approached without passing a river. Charles did not delay the attack till the rest of his infantry should arrive, but plunged into the water at the head of his guards, and crossed the river and the morass, the water frequently reaching above his shoulders. While he was thus pressing forward to the enemy he ordered his cavalry to go round the morass, and attack them in flank. The Muscovites, astonished that no barrier could defend them, were instantly routed by the king, who attacked them on foot with his guards, and by the Swedish cavalry.

These, having forced their way through the enemy, joined the king in the midst of the battle. He then mounted on horseback; but observing soon after a young Swedish gentleman, named Guillenstern, for whom he had a great regard, wounded and unable to walk, he obliged him to take his horse, and continued to command on foot at the head of his infantry. Of all the battles he had fought, this was perhaps the most glorious, being that in which he encountered the greatest dangers, and displayed the most consummate skill and prudence. The memory of it is still preserved by a medal, with this inscription on one side—*Silvæ,*

*Paludes, Aggeres, Hostes victi*: on the reverse the following verse of Lucan:—*Victrices copias alium laturus in Orbem.*

The Russians, thus driven from their posts, repassed the Borysthenes,\* which divides Poland from Muscovy. But this did not induce Charles to give over the pursuit, who followed them across that great river, which he passed at Moghilev, the last town of Poland, and which alternately belonged to the Poles and to the Russians, the usual fate of frontier towns.

The Czar, seeing his empire, in which he had lately established the polite arts and a flourishing trade, thus exposed to a war, which, in a short time, might overturn all his mighty projects, and perhaps deprive him of his crown, began to think seriously of peace, and accordingly ventured to make some proposals to that purpose by a Polish gentleman, whom he sent to the Swedish army. Charles, who had not been accustomed to make peace with his enemies, except in their own capitals, replied, "I will treat with the Czar at Moscow." When this haughty answer was reported to the Czar, he said, "My brother Charles always affects to play the part of Alexander; but I flatter myself he will not find in me another Darius."

From Moghilev, where the king passed the Dnieper, as you advance towards the north, about thirty leagues along the banks of that river, still on the frontiers of Poland and Muscovy, you enter

\* Borysthenes is the old name of the river Dnieper, which flows into the Black Sea at Kherson.

the country of Smolensk, through which lies the great road that leads from Poland to Muscovy. This way the Czar directed his flight, and the king pursued him by long marches; so that part of the Russian rearguard was frequently engaged with the dragoons of the vanguard of the Swedes. The latter had generally the advantage, but they were weakened even by victory in these small skirmishes, which were never decisive, and in which they constantly lost a number of men.

On the 22d of September, 1708, the king attacked a body of ten thousand horse and six thousand Calmucks, near the town of Smolensk.

The Calmucks are Tartars, living between the kingdom of Astracan, subject to the Czar, and that of Samarcande, belonging to the Usbeck Tartars, and the country of Timur, known by the name of Tamerlane. The country of the Calmucks extends eastward to the mountains which divide the dominions of the Mogul from the western parts of Asia.

The inhabitants of that part of the country which borders upon Astracan are tributary to the Czar, who lays claim to an absolute authority over them; but their vagrant life hinders him from making it good, and obliges him to treat them in the same manner as the Grand Seignior treats the Arabs—sometimes conniving at and sometimes punishing their depredations. There are always some of these Calmucks in the Russian army, and the Czar had even reduced them to a regular discipline, like the rest of his soldiers.

Charles attacked these troops with only six regi-

ments of horse and four thousand foot; broke the Muscovites at the first onset, at the head of his regiment of Ostrogothia, and obliged them to fly. He pursued them through rugged and hollow ways, where the Calmucks, awhile concealing themselves, soon reappeared, and cut off the regiment, at the head of which the king fought, from the rest of the Swedish army. The Russians and Calmucks jointly surrounded this regiment, and forced their way even to the king's person. Two aides-de-camp fighting near him fell at his feet. The king's horse was killed under him; and as one of his equerries was presenting him with another, both the equerry and horse were shot dead upon the spot. Charles then fought on foot, surrounded by his officers, who instantly flocked around him.

Many of them were taken, wounded, or slain, or pushed to a great distance from the king by the crowds that assailed them, so that he was soon left with no more than five attendants. With his own hand he had killed above twelve of the enemy, without receiving a single wound, owing to that surprising good fortune which had hitherto attended him, and upon which he constantly relied. At length a colonel named Dardof broke his way through the Calmucks, and with a single company of his regiment arrived just in time to save the king. The rest of the Swedes put the Tartars to the sword. The army recovered its ranks; Charles mounted his horse, and, fatigued as he was, pursued the Russians for two leagues.

The conqueror was still in the great road to the

capital of Muscovy. But the distance from Smolensk, near which the battle was fought, to Moscow is about a hundred French leagues; and the army began to be in want of provisions. Count Piper earnestly entreated the king to wait till General Lewenhaupt, who was bringing him supplies, together with a reinforcement of fifteen thousand men, should arrive. The king, who seldom indeed took counsel of any, not only rejected this wholesome advice, but, to the great astonishment of all the army, quitted the road to Moscow, and began to march southward towards the Ukraine, the country of the Cossacks, lying between Little Tartary, Poland, and Muscovy. This country extends about a hundred French leagues from north to south, and almost as many from east to west. It is divided into two parts, nearly equal, by the Dnieper, which runs from the north-west to the south-east. The chief town is Bathurin, situated upon the little river Sem. The most northern part of the Ukraine is rich and well cultivated. The southernmost, lying in the forty-eighth degree of latitude, is one of the most fertile countries in the world, and yet one of the most desolate. Its wretched form of government stifles in embryo all the blessings which nature, if properly encouraged, would bring forth for the inhabitants. The people of these cantons indeed neither sow nor plant, because the Tartars of Budziack, Precop, and Moldavia, being all of them freebooters and banditti, would rob them of their harvests.

The Ukraine has always aspired after liberty; but

being surrounded by Muscovy, the states of the Grand Seignior, and by Poland, it has been obliged to choose a protector, and consequently a master, in one of these three states. The inhabitants at first put themselves under the protection of the Poles, who treated them too much like vassals. They afterwards submitted to the Russians, who governed them with as despotic a sway. They had originally the privilege of electing a prince under the name of general; but they were soon deprived of that right; and their general was nominated by the court of Moscow.

The person who then filled that station was a Polish gentleman, named Mazeppa, born in the palatinate of Podolia. He had been educated as page to John Casimir, and had received some taste or polite learning in his court. An intrigue which he had had in his youth with the wife of a Polish gentleman having been discovered, the husband caused him to be whipped with rods, then bound stark-naked upon a wild horse, and turned adrift in that condition. The horse, which had been brought out of the Ukraine, returned to his own country, and carried Mazeppa with him, half-dead with hunger and fatigue. Some of the country people gave him assistance; and he lived among them for a long time, distinguishing himself in several excursions against the Tartars. The superiority of his knowledge gained him great respect among the Cossacks; and as his reputation greatly increased, the Czar found it necessary to make him prince of the Ukraine.

Being one day at table with the Czar at Moscow, the emperor proposed to him the task of disciplining the Cossacks, and rendering them more docile and dependent. Mazeppa replied that the situation of the Ukraine, and the genius of the nation, were insuperable obstacles to such a scheme. The Czar, who began to be over-heated with wine, and had not, when sober, always the command of his passions, called him a traitor, and threatened to have him impaled.

Mazeppa, on his return to the Ukraine, formed the design of a revolt; the execution of which was greatly facilitated by the Swedish army that soon after appeared on the frontiers. He resolved to render himself independent, and to erect the Ukraine, with some other ruins of the Russian empire, into a powerful kingdom. Brave, enterprising, and indefatigable, he entered secretly into a league with the King of Sweden to accelerate the ruin of the Czar, and to convert it to his own advantage.

The king appointed a rendezvous near the river Desna, where Mazeppa promised to meet him at the head of thirty thousand men, with ammunition and provisions, together with all his treasures, which were immense. The Swedish army therefore continued its march on that side, to the great regret of all the officers, who knew nothing of the king's treaty with the Cossacks. In the meantime Charles sent orders to Lewenhaupt to bring his troops and provisions with all possible despatch into the Ukraine, where he proposed to pass the winter, that having once secured that country, he



might the more easily conquer Muscovy in the ensuing spring. He continued still to advance towards the river Desna, which falls into the Dnieper at Kiev.

The obstructions the troops had hitherto encountered in their march were but trifling, in comparison of what they met with in this new route. They were obliged to cross a marshy forest fifty leagues in length. General Lagercron, who led the way with five thousand soldiers and pioneers, misled the army thirty leagues too far to the east; nor did the king discover the mistake till after a tiresome march of four days. With difficulty they regained the right road; but almost all their artillery and wagons were lost, being either stuck fast or entirely sunk in the morass.

After a march of twelve days, attended with many vexatious and untoward circumstances, during which they had consumed the small quantity of biscuit that was left, the army, exhausted with hunger and fatigue, arrived on the banks of the Desna; the very spot which Mazeppa had marked out as a place of rendezvous; but instead of meeting with him, they found a body of Muscovites advancing towards the other side of the river. The king was astonished, but resolved immediately to pass the Desna, and attack the enemy. The banks of the river were so steep that the soldiers were obliged to descend to the water with ropes. They crossed it in their usual manner, some on floats which were made in haste, and others by swimming. The body of Muscovites which arrived

at the same time did not exceed eight thousand men; so that it made but little resistance, and this obstacle was also surmounted.

Charles advanced farther into this desolate country, alike uncertain of his route, and of Mazeppa's fidelity. That Cossack appeared at last, but rather like a fugitive than a powerful ally. The Muscovites had discovered and defeated his design; they had fallen upon the Cossacks and cut them in pieces. His principal friends being taken sword in hand, had, to the number of thirty, been broken on the wheel; his towns were reduced to ashes; his treasures plundered; the provisions he was preparing for the King of Sweden seized; and it was with great difficulty that he himself made his escape with six thousand men, and some horses laden with gold and silver. He gave the king nevertheless some hopes that he should be able to assist him by his intelligence in that unknown country, and by the affection of the Cossacks, who, being enraged against the Russians, flocked to the camp, and supplied the army with provisions.

Charles hoped at least that General Lewenhaupt would come and repair this misfortune. He was to bring with him about fifteen thousand Swedes, who were better than a hundred thousand Cossacks, together with ammunition and provisions. At length he arrived in much the same condition as Mazeppa.

He had already passed the Dnieper above Moghilev, and advanced twenty leagues beyond it, on the road to the Ukraine. He was bringing the

king a convoy of eight thousand wagons, with the money which he had levied in his march through Lithuania. He no sooner approached the town of Lesno, near the conflux of the rivers Pronia and Sossa (Soj), (which fell into the Dnieper, after their junction at a great distance beyond), than the Czar appeared at the head of nearly forty thousand men.

The Swedish general, who had not sixteen thousand complete, disdained, however, the defence of intrenchments. A long train of victories had inspired the Swedes with so much confidence that they never informed themselves of the number of their enemies, but only of the place where they were. Accordingly, on the 7th of October 1708, in the afternoon, Lewenhaupt, without hesitation, advanced against him. In the first attack the Swedes killed fifteen hundred Russians. The Czar's army was thrown into confusion, and fled on all sides. The Emperor of Russia saw himself upon the point of being entirely defeated. He was sensible that the safety of his dominions depended upon the success of this day, and that he must be utterly ruined should Lewenhaupt join the King of Sweden with a victorious army.

The moment he saw his troops begin to give way he flew to the rear-guard, where the Cossacks and Calmucks were posted. "I charge you," said he, "to fire upon every one that runs away, even on me myself, should I be so cowardly as to fly." Returning then to the van, he rallied his troops himself, assisted by the Princes Menzikoff and

Gallitzin. Lewenhaupt, who had received strict orders to rejoin his master, chose rather to continue his march than renew the battle, imagining he had done enough to prevent the enemy from pursuing him.

Next morning, about eleven o'clock, the Czar attacked him upon the border of the morass, and extended his lines with a view to surround him. The Swedes faced about on all sides, and the battle was maintained with equal obstinacy. The loss of the Muscovites was three times greater than that of the Swedes; the former still kept their ground, and the victory was left undecided.

At four in the afternoon General Bauer brought the Czar a reinforcement of troops. The battle was then renewed for the third time with more eagerness than ever, and lasted till night; when at length superior numbers prevailed. The Swedes were broken, routed, and driven back to their baggage. Lewenhaupt rallied his troops behind the wagons. The Swedes were conquered, but disdained to fly. They were still about nine thousand in number, and not so much as one of them deserted. The general drew them up in order of battle with as much ease as if they had not been defeated. The Czar, on the other side, remained all night under arms, and forbade his officers under pain of being cashiered, and his soldiers under pain of death, to leave their ranks in order to plunder.

Next morning, at daybreak, he ordered a fresh assault. Meantime Lewenhaupt had retired to an

advantageous situation at the distance of a few miles, after having spiked part of his cannon, and set fire to his baggage wagons.

The Muscovites arrived in sufficient time to prevent the whole convoy from being consumed by the flames. They seized about six thousand carriages, which they saved. The Czar, desirous of completing the defeat of the Swedes, sent one of his generals, named Phlug, to attack them again for the fifth time. The general offered them an honorable capitulation. Lewenhaupt refused it, and fought a fifth battle, as bloody as any of the former. Of the nine thousand soldiers he had left, he lost about one-half, the other remained unbroken. At length, night coming on, the Swedish general, after having sustained five battles against forty thousand men, passed the Sossa with about five thousand soldiers that remained. The Czar lost about ten thousand men in these five engagements, in which he had the glory of conquering the Swedes; and Lewenhaupt that of disputing the victory for three days, and of effecting a retreat without having been forced in his last post. Thus he arrived at his master's camp with the honor of having so bravely defended himself, but bringing with him neither ammunition nor army.

The king of Sweden thus found himself destitute of provisions, cut off from all communication with Poland, and surrounded with enemies in the heart of a country where he had no other resource than his own courage.

In this extremity, the memorable winter of 1709,

which was still more severe in that part of Europe than in France, destroyed numbers of his troops; for Charles resolved to brave the seasons, as he had done his enemies, and ventured to make long marches during this mortal cold. It was in one of these marches that two thousand men fell down dead with cold almost before his eyes. The dragoons had no boots, and the infantry were without shoes, and almost without clothes. They were forced to make stockings of the skins of wild beasts in the best manner they could, and they were frequently in want of bread. They had been obliged to throw almost all their cannon into the marshes and rivers, for want of horses to draw them; so that this once flourishing army was reduced to twenty-four thousand men ready to perish with hunger. They no longer received any advices from Sweden, nor were able to send any thither. In this condition only one officer complained. "What!" said the king to him, "are you uneasy at being so far from your wife? If you are a true soldier I will lead you to such a distance that you shall hardly be able to hear from Sweden once in three years."

The Marquis de B——, afterwards ambassador in Sweden, told me that a soldier ventured, in presence of the whole army, to present to the king, with an air of complaint, a piece of bread that was black and mouldy, made of barley and oats, which was the only food they then had, and of which they had not even a sufficiency. The king received the piece of bread without the least emotion, ate every

morsel of it, and then coolly said to the soldier, "It is not good, but it may be eaten." This incident, trifling as it is, if indeed anything that increases respect and confidence can be called trifling, contributed more than all the rest to make the Swedish army support those hardships, which would have been intolerable under any other general.

In this situation he at last received news from Stockholm; but it was only advice of the death of his sister, the Duchess of Holstein, who was carried off by the small-pox in the month of December 1708, in the twenty-seventh year of her age. She was a princess as mild and gentle as her brother was imperious in his disposition and implacable in his revenge. He had always entertained a great affection for her, and was the more afflicted with her death, as, now beginning to taste of misfortunes himself, he had naturally become a little more susceptible.

He was also informed that money and troops had been raised in Sweden agreeably to his orders. But nothing could reach his camp, as between him and Stöckholm there were nearly five hundred leagues to march, and an enemy superior in number to engage.

The Czar, who was as active as the king, after having sent fresh troops to the assistance of the confederates of Poland, who, under the command of General Siniauski, exerted their joint efforts against Stanislaus, immediately advanced into the Ukraine, in the midst of this severe winter, to make

head against the King of Sweden. He continued to pursue the political scheme he had formed, of weakening his enemies by petty rencontres, wisely judging that the Swedish army must in the end be entirely ruined, as it could not possibly be recruited. The cold must certainly have been very severe, as it obliged the two monarchs to agree to a suspension of arms. But on the 1st of February they renewed their military operations, in the midst of frost and snow.

After several slight skirmishes and some losses, the king perceived, in the month of April, that he had only eighteen thousand Swedes remaining. Mazeppa alone, the prince of the Cossacks, supplied them with provisions, without which assistance the army must have perished with cold and hunger. At this juncture the Czar made proposals to Mazeppa to return again under his authority. But whether it was that the terrible punishment of the wheel, by which his friends had perished, made the Cossack apprehend the same danger for himself, or that he was desirous of revenging their deaths, he continued faithful to his new ally.

Charles, with his eighteen thousand Swedes, had neither lost the design nor the hope of penetrating to Moscow. He therefore, towards the end of May, laid siege to Pultowa, upon the river Vorska, at the eastern extremity of the Ukraine, and more than thirteen leagues from the Dnieper. This country is inhabited by the Zaporavians, the most extraordinary people on the earth. They are a collection



of ancient Russians, Poles, and Tartars, professing a species of Christianity, and exercising a kind of freebooting resembling that of the Buccaneers. They elect a chief, whom they frequently depose or strangle. They suffer no woman to live among them, but carry off all the children for twenty or thirty leagues around, and bring them up in their own habits. In the summer they always live in the open fields; in the winter they shelter themselves in large barns, which contain four or five hundred men. They fear nothing, live free, and brave death for the smallest booty, with the same intrepidity as Charles XII. did in order to obtain the power of bestowing crowns. The Czar gave them sixty thousand florins, in the hope to engage them in his interest. They took his money, but, through the intrigues of Mazeppa, immediately declared in favor of Charles; though their service was of very little consequence, as they esteem it a folly to fight for anything but plunder. It was no small advantage, however, that they were prevented from doing harm. The number of their troops was at most but about two thousand. Ten of their chiefs were presented one morning to the king; but they had great difficulty to prevail on them to remain sober, as they commonly begin the day by getting drunk. They were brought to the entrenchments, where they showed their dexterity in firing with long carabines; for, being placed upon the mounds, they killed, at the distance of six hundred paces, such of the enemy as were pointed out. To these banditti Charles added several thousand Wallach-

ians, whom he had hired from the Cham of Little Tartary: He then laid siege to Pultowa, with all these troops of Zaporavians, Cossacks, and Wallachians; which, joined to his eighteen thousand Swedes, made up an army of about thirty thousand men, but an army in a wretched condition, and in want of everything. The Czar had formed a magazine in Pultowa, which if the king had taken, he would have opened himself a way to Moscow; and have been able at least, amidst the great abundance he would then have possessed, to await the arrival of the succors which he still expected from Sweden, Livonia, Pomerania, and Poland. His only resource, therefore, being in the conquest of Pultowa, he pressed the siege of it with great ardor. Mazeppa, who carried on a correspondence in that town, assured him that he would soon be master of it. This hope re-animated the whole army; for the soldiers considered the taking of Pultowa as the end of all their miseries.

The king perceived, from the beginning of the siege, that he had taught his enemies the art of war; for, in spite of all his precautions, Prince Menzikoff threw succors into the town; by which means the garrison was strong to the number of almost five thousand men.

They made several sallies, and sometimes with success: they likewise sprung mines; but what rendered the town impregnable was the approach of the Czar, who advanced with seventy thousand men. Charles went to reconnoitre them on the 27th of May, the day of his birth, and beat one

of their detachments; but as he was returning to his camp, he received a shot from a carabine which pierced his boot, and shattered the bone of his heel. There was not the least alteration observable in his countenance, from which it could be suspected that he was wounded; he continued to give orders with great composure, and after this accident remained near six hours on horseback. One of his domestics observing that the sole of the king's boot was covered with blood, ran to call the surgeons; and the pain had now become so intense that they were obliged to assist him in dismounting, and to carry him into his tent. The surgeons examined the wound, and were of opinion that the leg must be cut off. The consternation of the army on this occasion was inexpressible, till one of the surgeons, named Newman, who had more skill and courage than the rest, affirmed that by making deep incisions he could save the king's leg. "Fall to work then presently," said the king to him; "cut boldly, and fear nothing." He himself held his leg with both his hands, and beheld the incisions that were made in it, as if the operation had been performed upon another person.

While they were laying on the dressings, he ordered an assault to be made the next day; but he had hardly given this order, before he was informed that the whole army of the enemy was advancing against him. It then became necessary to alter his measures. Charles, wounded and incapable of acting, saw himself situated between the

Dnieper and the river that runs to Pultowa, in a desert country, without any places of security, without ammunition, and in the face of an army which at once cut off his retreat and prevented his being supplied with provisions. In this extremity he did not assemble a council of war, as has been published in some other accounts; but on the night between the 7th and 8th of July he sent for Marshal Renschild into his tent and without deliberation or the least discomposure ordered him to make the necessary dispositions for attacking the Czar next day. Renschild made no objections, and went to carry his orders into execution. At the door of the king's tent he met Count Piper, with whom he had had a misunderstanding for some time, which frequently happens between the minister and the general. Piper asked him if he had any news. "No," said the general coldly, and passed on to give his orders. As soon as count Piper had entered the tent, "Has Renschild told you nothing?" said the king. "Nothing," answered Piper. "Well, then, I will tell you," replied the king; "tomorrow we shall give battle." Count Piper was terrified at so desperate a resolution; but as he well knew it was impossible to make his master change his mind, he expressed his surprise only by his silence, and left Charles to sleep till break of day.

It was on the 8th of July, 1709, that the decisive battle of Pultowa was fought between the two most extraordinary monarchs that were then in the world: Charles XII. illustrious from nine years of victories;

Peter Alexiowitz from nine years of labors, taken to form troops equal to those of Sweden; the one glorious for having given away dominions; the other for having civilized his own; Charles fond of dangers, and fighting for glory alone; Alexiowitz not avoiding dangers, and making war only for advantage; the Swedish monarch liberal from greatness of soul; the Muscovite never giving but with some design; the one master of a self-command and sobriety beyond example, of a magnanimous disposition, and never cruel but once; the other not having yet divested himself from the barbarism of his education and of his country, as much the object of terror to his subjects as of admiration to strangers, and too prone to excesses, which even shortened his days. Charles bore the title of "Invincible," of which a single moment might deprive him; the neighboring nations had given Peter Alexiowitz the name of "Great," which, as he did not owe it to his victories, he could not lose by defeat.

To have a distinct idea of this battle, and the place where it was fought, we must figure to ourselves Pultowa on the north, the camp of the King of Sweden on the south, stretching a little towards the east, his baggage about a mile behind him, and the river of Pultowa on the north of the town, running from east to west.

The Czar had passed the river about a league from Pultowa, toward the west, and was beginning to form his camp.

At break of day the Swedes appeared before the

trenches with four iron cannon, which was the whole of their artillery; the rest were left in the camp, with about three thousand men, and four thousand remained with the baggage; so that the Swedish army which advanced against the enemy consisted of about one-and-twenty thousand men, of whom there were about sixteen thousand Swedes.

The Generals Renschild, Roos, Lewenhaupt Schlipenback, Hoorn, Sparre, Hamilton, the Prince of Wirtemberg the king's relation, and some others, the greatest part of whom had seen the battle of Narva, put the subaltern officers in mind of that day, wherein eight thousand Swedes defeated an army of eighty thousand Muscovites in their entrenchments. The officers exhorted the soldiers by the same motive, every one encouraging each other in their march.

The king, carried in a litter at the head of his infantry, conducted the march. A party of the cavalry advanced by his order to attack that of the enemy; and the battle began with this engagement at half-an-hour past four in the morning. The enemy's cavalry was posted towards the west, on the right side of the Russian camp. Prince Menzikoff and Count Gallowin had placed them at certain distances between redoubts lined with cannon. General Schlipenback, at the head of the Swedes, rushed upon this body of cavalry. All those who have served in the Swedish troops know that it is almost impossible to withstand the fury of their first attack. The Muscovite squadrons were broken and routed. The Czar, who ran up to

rally them in person, had his hat pierced with a musket-ball; Menzikoff had three horses killed under him; the Swedes cried out "Victory!"

Charles did not doubt but that the battle was gained. He had sent in the middle of the night General Creuts, with five thousand horse or dragoons, who were to take the enemy in flank, while he attacked them in front; but, as his ill fortune would have it, Creuts mistook his way, and did not appear. The Czar, who thought he was ruined, had time to rally his cavalry. He now in his turn fell upon that of the king, which, not being supported by the detachment of Creuts, was broken in its turn. Schlipenback was taken prisoner in this engagement. At the same time, seventy-two pieces of cannon played from the camp upon the Swedish cavalry; and the Russian infantry, opening their lines, advanced to attack that of Charles.

The Czar now detached Prince Menzikoff to go and post himself between Pultowa and the Swedes. Prince Menzikoff executed his master's orders with dexterity and expedition, and not only cut off the communication between the Swedish army and the camp before Pultowa, but having met with a reserve corps of three thousand men, he surrounded them and cut them to pieces. If Menzikoff performed this exploit of his own accord, Russia owes its preservation to him; if it was by order of the Czar, he was an adversary worthy of Charles XII. Meanwhile, the Russian infantry came out of their lines, and advanced into the plain in order of battle. On the other hand, the Swedish cavalry rallied within

a quarter of a league from the enemy; and the king, assisted by Marshal Renschild, made the necessary disposition for a general engagement.

He ranged the remainder of his troops in two lines, his infantry occupying the center, and his cavalry the two wings. The Czar disposed his army in the same manner; he, however, had the advantage of numbers, and of seventy-two pieces of cannon, while the Swedes had no more than four to oppose him, and began to be in want of powder.

The Emperor of Muscovy was in the center of his army, having then only the title of Major-General, and seemed to obey General Zeremetoff. But he rode from rank to rank in the character of Emperor, mounted on a Turkish horse, which was a present from the Great Sultan, animating the officers and soldiers, and promising rewards to them all.

At nine in the morning the battle was renewed. One of the first discharges of the Russian cannon carried off the two horses of Charles's litter. He caused two others to be put to it. A second discharge broke the litter in pieces, and overturned the king. Of four-and-twenty drabants, who relieved each other in carrying him, one-and-twenty were killed. The Swedes, struck with consternation, began to stagger; and the cannon of the enemy continuing to mow them down, the first line fell back upon the second, and the second began to fly. In this last action it was only one line of ten thousand Russian infantry that routed the whole Swedish army; so much were matters changed!



All the Swedish writers affirm that they would have gained the battle, if they had not committed several blunders; but all the officers pretend that it was a great error to give battle at all, and a greater still to shut themselves up in a desert country, against the advice of the most prudent generals, in opposition to a warlike enemy three times stronger both in number of men and the many resources from which the Swedes were entirely cut off. The remembrance of Narva was the principal cause of Charles's misfortune at Pultowa.

The Prince of Wirtemberg, General Renschild, and several principal officers, were already made prisoners; the camp before Pultowa was stormed; and all was thrown into a confusion against which they had no remedy. Count Piper, with some officers of the Chancery, had left the camp, and neither knew what to do, nor what was become of the king, but ran about from one corner of the field of battle to the other. A major, named Bere, offered to conduct them to the baggage; but the clouds of dust and smoke which covered the country, and the confusion of mind so natural amidst such consternation, brought them directly to the counterscarp of the town, where they were all made prisoners by the garrison.

The king refused to fly, and was unable to defend himself. It was at this instant that General Poniatowsky happened to be near him, colonel of Stanislaus's Polish guards, a man of extraordinary merit, who had been induced, from his attachment to the person of Charles, to follow him into the

Ukraine, without possessing any command. He was a man, who, in all the occurrences of life, and amidst those dangers where others would at the best have displayed only courage, always carried out his resolution with despatch, prudence, and success. He made a sign to two drabants, who took the king under the arms and placed him on horseback, notwithstanding the extreme pain of his wounds.

Poniatowsky, though he had no command in the army, became on this occasion a general through necessity, and rallied five hundred horse near the king's person; some of them drabants, others officers, and a few private troopers. This body being assembled, and animated by the misfortunes of their prince, made their way through more than ten Russian regiments, and conducted Charles through the midst of the enemy, for the space of a league, to the baggage of the Swedish army.

Charles, being pursued in his flight, had his horse killed under him; Colonel Gieta, though wounded and spent with loss of blood, gave him his. Thus in the course of the flight they twice put Charles on horseback, although he had not been able to mount a horse during the engagement.

This surprising retreat was of great consequence in such distressful circumstances; but Charles was obliged to fly still farther. They found Count Piper's coach among the baggage; for the king had never used one since he left Stockholm: they put him into this vehicle, and took their route towards the Dnieper with great precipitation. The

king, who from the time they put him on horseback till his arrival at the baggage, had not spoken a single word, at length inquired what had become of Count Piper. They told him he was taken prisoner, with all the officers of the Chancery. "And General Renschild and the Duke of Wirtemberg?" added the king. "They are also prisoners," said Poniatowsky. "Prisoners to the Russians!" returned Charles, shrugging up his shoulders: "Come, then, let us rather go to the Turks." They could not perceive, however, the least mark of dejection in his countenance; and whoever had seen him at that time, without knowing his situation, would never have suspected that he was conquered and wounded.

While he was making his escape, the Russians seized his artillery in the camp before Pultowa, his baggage, and his military chests, in which they found six millions in specie, the spoils of the Poles and Saxons. About nine thousand men, Swedes and Cossacks, were killed in the battle, and about six thousand taken prisoners. There still remained about sixteen thousand men, including the Swedes, Poles, and Cossacks, who fled toward the Dnieper, under the conduct of General Lewenhaupt. He marched one way with these fugitive troops, and the king took another road with some of his horse. The coach in which he rode broke down in their march, and they again set him on horseback. To complete his misfortune, he wandered all night in a wood; where, his courage being no longer able to support his exhausted spirits, the pain of his

wound becoming more intolerable through fatigue, and his horse falling under him through weariness, he lay several hours at the foot of a tree in danger of being surprised every moment by the enemy, who were searching for him on all sides.

At last, in the night of the 9th or 10th of July, he found himself opposite to the Dnieper. Lewenhaupt had just arrived with the remains of his army. The Swedes beheld with a mixture of joy and grief their king, whom they had believed dead. The enemy was approaching, and the Swedes had neither a bridge to pass the river, time to make one, powder to defend themselves, nor provision to support an army which had eaten nothing for two days. At the same time the remains of this army were Swedes, and the conquered king was Charles XII. Almost all the officers imagined that they were to wait there with firmness for the Russians, and that they should either conquer or die on the banks of the river. There was no doubt but Charles would have taken this resolution had he not been exhausted with weakness. His wound had now come to suppuration, accompanied by fever; and it has been remarked that men of the greatest intrepidity, when seized with a fever (which is common in suppuration), lose that spirit of valor which, like other virtues, requires the direction of a clear head. Charles was now no longer himself. This is what I have been assured of, and what is most probably the truth. They carried him along like a sick person in a state of insensibility. There was yet, by good luck, a sorry calash, which they accidentally

had brought thither with them. This they put on board a little boat, and the king and General Mazepa embarked in another. The latter had saved several coffers full of money ; but the current being too rapid, and a violent wind beginning to rise, the Cossack threw more than three-fourths of his treasures into the river to lighten the boat. Mullern, the king's chancellor, and Count Poniatowsky, a man more necessary to the king than ever, by the resources which his ingenuity furnished in every difficulty, crossed over in other barks, with some officers. Three hundred of the Swedish cavalry, and a great number of Poles and Cossacks, trusting to the goodness of their horses, ventured to pass the river by swimming. Their troop, keeping close together, resisted the current, and broke the waves ; but all those who attempted to pass a little below were carried down by the stream, and perished in the river. Of the infantry who risked the passage, not one arrived on the opposite shore.

While the shattered remains of the army were in this extremity, Prince Menzikoff approached with ten thousand horsemen, having each a foot soldier behind him. The carcasses of the Swedes who had died by the way of their wounds, fatigue, and hunger, sufficiently apprised him of the road which the fugitive army had taken. The prince sent a trumpet to the Swedish general, to offer him a capitulation. Four general officers were immediately despatched by Lewenhaupt to receive the commands of the conqueror. Before that day sixteen thousand soldiers of King Charles would

have attacked the whole forces of the Russian empire, and would have perished to a man rather than surrender. But after the loss of a battle, and flight of two days, deprived of the presence of their prince, who was himself constrained to fly, the strength of every soldier being exhausted, and their courage no longer supported by hope, the love of life overcame their natural intrepidity. Colonel Trouteffette alone, afterwards governor of Stralsund, observing the Muscovites approach, advanced with one Swedish battalion to attack them, hoping by this means to induce the rest of the troops to follow his example. But Lewenhaupt was obliged to oppose this unavailing ardor. The capitulation was settled, and the whole army were made prisoners of war. Some soldiers, in despair at the thoughts of falling into the hands of the Muscovites, precipitated themselves into the Dnieper. Two officers of the regiment of the brave Trouteffette killed each other, and the rest were made slaves. They all filed off in the presence of Prince Menzikoff, laying their arms at his feet, as thirty thousand Muscovites had done nine years before at those of the King of Sweden at Narva; with this difference, that the king dismissed all his prisoners, whom he did not fear, while the Czar retained his.

These unhappy creatures were afterwards dispersed through the Czar's dominions, particularly in Siberia, a vast province of Great Tartary, which extends eastward to the frontiers of the Chinese empire. In this barbarous country, where even the use of bread was unknown, the Sweden

became ingenious through necessity, and exercised the trades and employments of which they had the least notion. All the distinctions which fortune makes among men were there banished. The officer who could not follow any trade was obliged to cleave and carry wood for the soldier, now turned tailor, clothier, joiner, mason, or goldsmith, and who thus earned his subsistence. Some of the officers became painters, and others architects; some of them taught languages and mathematics. They even established some public schools, which in time became so useful and famous, that children were sent thither from Moscow.

Count Piper, the King of Sweden's first minister, was for a long time confined in prison at Petersburg. The Czar was persuaded, as well as the rest of Europe, that this minister had sold his master to the Duke of Marlborough, and drawn on Muscovy the arms of Sweden, which might have given peace to Europe. He therefore rendered his confinement the more severe. This minister died a few years after in Muscovy, little assisted by his own family, who lived in opulence at Stockholm, and vainly lamented by his king, who would never condescend to offer a ransom for his minister, which he feared the Czar would not accept of; as no agreement of exchange had ever been settled between Charles and the Czar.

The Emperor of Muscovy, elated with a joy which he took no pains to conceal, received

upon the field of battle the prisoners, whom they brought to him in crowds; and asked every moment, "Where, then, is my brother Charles?"

He did the Swedish generals the honor of inviting them to his table. Among other questions which he put to them, he asked General Renschild, "what might be the number of his master's troops before the battle?" Renschild answered, "that the king alone had the muster-roll, and would never communicate it to any one; but that for his own part, he imagined the whole might be about thirty thousand, of which eighteen thousand were Swedes, and the rest Cossacks." The Czar seemed to be surprised, and asked "how they dared to penetrate into so distant a country, and lay siege to Pultowa, with such a handful of men?" "We were not always consulted," replied the Swedish general, "but, like faithful servants, we obeyed our master's orders, without ever presuming to contradict them." The Czar, at this answer, turned about to some of his courtiers, who were formerly suspected of having engaged in a conspiracy against him, "Ah!" said he, "see how a king ought to be served;" and then, taking a glass of wine, "To the health," said he, "of my masters in the art of war." Renschild asked him who were the persons whom he honored with so high a title. "You, gentlemen, the Swedish generals," replied the Czar. "Your majesty is very ungrateful, then," replied the Count, "to treat your masters with so much severity." After dinner, the Czar caused their swords to be restored to all the general officers, and behaved to them like



a prince who wished to give his subjects a lesson of generosity and politeness, with which he was well acquainted. But this very prince, who treated the Swedish generals with so much humanity, caused all the Cossacks that fell into his hands to be broken on the wheel.

Thus the Swedish army, which left Saxony so triumphantly, was now no more. One half of them had perished with hunger, and the other half were either massacred or made slaves. Charles XII. had lost in one day the fruit of nine years' labor, and of almost a hundred battles. He was flying in a wretched calash, having by his side Major-General Hord, who was dangerously wounded. The rest of his party followed, some on foot, some on horseback, and others in wagons, through a desert, where they neither saw huts, tents, men, beasts, nor roads; everything was wanting, even water itself. It was now the beginning of July; the country lay in the forty-seventh degree of latitude; the dry sand of the desert rendered the heat of the sun more insupportable; the horses dropped down by the way; and the men were ready to die with thirst. A brook of muddy water, which they found towards evening, was their only resource; they filled some bladders with this water, which saved the lives of the king's little troop. After a march of five days, he at last found himself on the banks of the river Hypanis, now called Bug by the barbarians, who have disfigured the very names of those countries which once flourished so nobly in the possession of the Greek colonies.

This river joins the mouth of the Dnieper some miles lower, and falls along with it into the Black Sea.

On the other side of the Bug, towards the south, stands the little town of Oczakou, a frontier of the Turkish empire. The inhabitants seeing a troop of soldiers approach, to whose dress and language they were strangers, refused to carry them over the river without an order from Mehemet Pacha, governor of Oczakou. The king sent an express to the governor, to demand a passage. This Turk, not knowing what to do in a country where one false step frequently costs a man his life, did not dare to take anything upon himself, without having first obtained the permission of the seraskier of the province, who resides at Bender in Bessarabia. While they were waiting for this permission, the Russians, who had made the king's army prisoners, had crossed the Dnieper, and were approaching to take him also. At last the Pacha of Oczakou sent word to the king that he would furnish him with one small boat, to transport himself and two or three of his attendants. In this extremity the Swedes took by force what they could not obtain by gentle means. Some of them went over to the farther side in a small skiff, seized on some boats, and brought them to the hither bank of the river. This proved their safeguard; for the masters of the Turkish barks, fearing they should lose such a favorable opportunity of getting a good freight, came in crowds to offer their service. Precisely at the same time a favorable answer arrived from the

seraskier of Bender; but the Muscovites appeared, and the king had the mortification to see five hundred of his men seized by the enemy, whose insulting bravadoes he even heard. The Pacha of Oczakou, by means of an interpreter, asked his pardon for the delays which had occasioned the loss of these five hundred men, and humbly intreated him not to complain of it to the Sultan. Charles promised, though not without giving him as severe a reprimand as if he had been speaking to one of his own subjects.

The commander of Bender, who was likewise seraskier, a title which answers to that of general or pacha of the province, and signifies governor and superintendent, immediately sent an *aga*\* to compliment the king, and to offer him a magnificent tent, with provisions, baggage, wagons, and all the conveniences, officers, and attendants necessary to conduct him to Bender in a splendid manner; for it is the custom of the Turks, not only to defray the charges of ambassadors to the place of their residence, but likewise to supply with great liberality the necessities of those princes who take refuge among them, during the time of their stay.

\* *Aga* is the designation of various important officers in the Turkish Court some of whom are afterwards mentioned, as at page 195.

## BOOK V.

**State of Turkey—Charles takes up his abode near Bender—His Employments—His Intrigues at the Porte—His Designs—Augustus regains his Throne—The King of Denmark makes a Descent upon Sweden—All the other Dominions of Charles are attacked—The Czar enters Moscow in Triumph—The Battle of Pruth—History of the Czarina, who from a Peasant became an Empress.**

ACHMET III. at that time governed the Turkish empire. He had been placed upon the throne in 1703, in the room of his brother Mustapha, by a revolution like that which transferred the crown of England from James II. to his son-in-law William. Mustapha, by submitting in everything to his Mufti, whom the Turks abhorred, provoked the whole empire to rise against him. His army, by the assistance of which he hoped to punish the malcontents, joined his enemies. He was seized and deposed in form, and his brother taken from the seraglio in order to be created Sultan, almost without spilling a single drop of blood. Achmet shut up the deposed sultan in the seraglio at Con-

stantinople, where he lived for several years, to the great astonishment of the people, who had been accustomed to see the death of their princes immediately follow their dethronement.

The new sultan, as the only recompense for a crown which he owed to the ministers, generals, officers of the janissaries, and, in a word, to those who had any hand in the revolution, put them all to death, one after another, in case they should one day attempt a second revolution. By the sacrifice of so many brave men, he weakened the strength of the nation, but at the same time established his throne, at least for some years. He next applied himself to amass riches, and was the first of the Ottoman race who ventured to make a small alteration in the current coin, and to impose new taxes; but he was obliged to stop short in both these enterprises for fear of an insurrection. The rapacity and tyranny of this great sovereign are seldom extended farther than the officers of the empire, who, whatever they may be in other respects, are merely his domestic slaves; while the rest of the Mussulmen live in profound tranquillity, without fearing for their lives, their fortune, or their liberty.

Such was the Turkish emperor in whose territories the King of Sweden sought an asylum. As soon as he set foot in the Sultan's dominions, he wrote him a letter, which bears date the 13th of July, 1709. Several copies of this letter were spread abroad, all of which are now held spurious; but of all those I have seen, there is not one

which does not mark the haughtiness of the author, and is not more in accordance with his courage than his situation. The Sultan did not return an answer till towards the end of September. The pride of the Ottoman Porte made Charles sensible of the distinction it placed between a Turkish emperor and a king of part of Scandinavia, a conquered and fugitive Christian. For the rest, all these letters, which are seldom written by sovereigns themselves, are but vain formalities, which neither discover the qualities of the princes nor the state of their affairs.

Charles XII. was in effect in no other situation in Turkey than that of a captive honorably treated, yet he conceived the design of arming the Ottoman empire against his enemies, and flattered himself that he should reduce Poland under the yoke, and subdue Russia. He had an envoy at Constantinople; but the person that served him most effectually in his vast projects was the Count de Poniatowsky, who went to Constantinople without any commission, and soon rendered himself necessary to the king, agreeable to the Porte, and at last dangerous to the grand viziers themselves.\*

One of those who seconded his designs with the greatest address was the physician Fonseca, a Portuguese Jew, settled at Constantinople, a man of knowledge and of the world, well qualified

\* It was from this nobleman I received not only the remarks which have been published, and of which the chaplain Norberg made use, but likewise several other manuscripts relating to this History.

for the management of business, and perhaps the only philosopher of his nation; his profession procured him a free access to the Ottoman Porte, and frequently gained him the confidence of the viziers. With this gentlemen I was very well acquainted at Paris, who confirmed to me all the particulars I am going to relate. Count Poniatowsky has informed me, both by letters and in conversation, that he had had the address to convey some letters to the Sultana Validé, the mother of the reigning emperor, who had formerly been ill-used by her son, but now began to gain credit in the seraglio. A Jewess, who was often admitted to this princess, never ceased to recount to her the exploits of the King of Sweden, and charmed her ear by these relations. The sultana, moved by that secret admiration with which most women feel themselves inspired in favor of extraordinary men, even without having seen them, openly espoused Charles's cause in the seraglio, and would call him by no other name than that of "her Lion." "When will you," she would sometimes say to the sultan her son, "assist my Lion to devour this Czar?" She even so far dispensed with the austere rules of the seraglio, as to write several letters with her own hand to Count Poniatowsky, in whose custody they still are at the time of my writing this history.

Meanwhile they conducted the king with all honor to Bender, through the desert that was formerly called the Wilderness of the Getæ. The Turks took care that nothing should be wanting

on the way to render his journey agreeable. A great many Poles, Swedes, and Cossacks, who had escaped from the Muscovites, came by different roads to increase his train on their march. By the time he reached Bender he had eighteen hundred men, who were all maintained and lodged, they and their horses, at the expense of the Turkish Sultan.

The king chose to encamp near Bender, rather than lodge in the town. The Seraskier Jussuff Pacha caused a magnificent tent to be erected for him, and tents were likewise provided for all the lords of his retinue. Some time after Charles built a house in this place; the officers followed his example, and the soldiers raised barracks, so that this camp insensibly became a little town. The king, not yet being cured of his wound, was obliged to have a carious bone extracted from his foot; but as soon as he could mount a horse he resumed his usual labors, always rising before the sun, tiring three horses a day, and exercising his soldiers. His sole amusement was sometimes playing at chess; and as the characters of men are often discovered by the most trifling incidents, it may not be improper to observe that he always moved the king in his game, and even made more use of him than of the other pieces. By this means he lost every game.

At Bender Charles found himself amidst an abundance of everything, very uncommon to a conquered and fugitive prince; for besides the more than sufficient quantity of provisions, and the five hundred crowns a day which he received



from the Ottoman munificence, he still drew money from France, and borrowed of the merchants at Constantinople. A part of this money served to forward his intrigues in the seraglio, in buying the favors of the viziers, or procuring their ruin. The rest he distributed with great profusion among his officers and the janissaries who composed his guards at Bender. Grothusen, his favorite and treasurer, was the dispenser of his liberality; a man who, contrary to the custom of persons in that station, was as fond of giving as his master. He carried him one day an account of sixty thousand crowns in two lines; ten thousand crowns given to the Swedes and janissaries by the generous orders of his Majesty, and the rest spent by myself. "It is thus I would have my friends give in their accounts," said the king. "Mullen makes me read whole pages for the sum of ten thousand livres. I like the laconic style of Grothusen much better." One of his old officers, who was suspected of being somewhat covetous, complained to him that his Majesty gave all to Grothusen. "I give money," replied the king, "to none but those who know how to use it." This generosity frequently reduced him so low that he had not wherewith to give. More economy in his liberality would have been as honorable, and more for his interest, but it was the failing of this prince to carry every virtue to excess.

Great numbers of strangers went from Constantinople to see him. The Turks and the neighboring Tartars came thither in crowds. All respected

and admired him. His inflexible resolution to abstain from wine, and his regularity in assisting twice a day at public prayers, made them say, "This is a true Mussulman." And they burned with impatience to march along with him to the conquest of Muscovy.

During his stay at Bender, which was much longer than he expected, he insensibly acquired a taste for reading. Baron Fabricius, an attendant of the Duke of Holstein, a young man of an amiable character, who possessed that gayety of manner and easy turn of mind which is so agreeable to princes, was the person who engaged him in these literary amusements. He had been sent to reside with him at Bender to take care of the interests of the young Duke of Holstein, and he had succeeded therein by rendering himself agreeable. He had read all the best French authors. He persuaded the king to read the tragedies of Peter Corneille, those of Racine, and the works of Despreaux. The king had no relish for the satires of the last author, which indeed are far from being his best pieces, but he was very fond of his other writings. When he read that passage of the eighth satire, where the author treats Alexander as a fool and a madman, he tore the leaf.

Of all the French tragedies Mithridates was the one which pleased him most, because the situation of that monarch, vanquished, and still breathing revenge, was in accordance with his own. He showed M. Fabricius the passages that struck him, pointing them out with his finger, but would never

read any of them aloud, nor ever hazard a single word in French. Nay, when he afterwards saw M. des Alleurs, the French ambassador at the Porte, a man of distinguished merit, but acquainted only with his mother-tongue, he answered him in Latin, of which, when M. des Alleurs protested he did not understand four words, the king, rather than talk French, sent for an interpreter.

This was the employment of Charles XII. at Bender, where he waited till a Turkish army should come to his assistance. His envoy presented memorials in his name to the Grand Vizier, and Poniatowsky supported them with all his interest. The faculty of insinuation never fails of success. He was always dressed in the Turkish fashion, and had free access to every place. The Sultan presented him with a purse of a thousand ducats, and the Grand Vizier is reported to have said to him, "I will take your king in one hand, and a sword in the other, and will lead him to Moscow at the head of two hundred thousand men." This Grand Vizier was called Chourlouli-Ali Pacha. He was the son of a peasant of the village of Chourlou. Such an extraction is not held as a reproach among the Turks, who have no ranks of nobility, neither that which is annexed to certain employments, nor that which consists in titles. With them the dignity and importance of a man's character depend entirely upon his personal services; a feeling which prevails in most of the eastern countries, and one indeed the most natural, and which might be productive of the most benefi-

cial effects if posts of honor were conferred on none but men of merit. But the viziers, for the most part, are no better than the creatures of a black eunuch, or a favorite female slave.

The first minister soon changed his mind. The king could do nothing but negotiate. But the Czar could give money, which he did, and even made the money of Charles serve him on this occasion. The military chest which he took at Pultowa furnished him with new arms against the vanquished king; and it was no longer the question at court whether war should be made upon the Russians. The interest of the Czar was all powerful at the Porte, which granted such honors to his envoy as the Muscovite ministers had never before enjoyed at Constantinople. - He was allowed to have a séraglio, that is to say a palace, in the quarter of the Franks, and the liberty of conversing with other foreign ministers. The Czar even thought he might demand that General Mazeppa should be put into his hands, as Charles had caused the unhappy Patkul to be delivered up to him. Chourlouli-Ali Pacha knew not how to refuse anything to a sovereign who made his demands with millions in his hand. Thus the very same Grand Vizier who had before promised, in the most solemn manner, to lead the King of Sweden into Muscovy with two hundred thousand men, dared to propose to him to consent to the sacrifice of General Mazeppa. Charles was enraged at this demand. It is hard to say how far the Vizier might have pushed the affair, had not Mazeppa, who was now seventy years of

age, died exactly at this juncture. The grief and indignation of the king were greatly augmented when he learned that Tolstoy, who had now become the Czar's ambassador at the Porte, was publicly attended by the Swedes who had been made slaves at Pultowa, and that those brave soldiers were every day exposed to sale in the market at Constantinople. Nay, the Russian ambassador said aloud that the Mussulman troops at Bender were placed there more with a view to secure the king's person than to do him any honor.

Charles, abandoned by the Grand Vizier, and vanquished by the Czar's money in Turkey, as he had before been by his arms in the Ukraine, saw himself deceived and despised by the Porte, and almost a prisoner among the Tartars. His attendants began to despair. He himself alone remained firm, and never appeared dejected, even for a moment. He believed the Sultan to be ignorant of the intrigues of Chourlouli-Ali, his grand vizier. He resolved therefore to acquaint him with them, and Poniatowsky took the charge of this hazardous enterprise. The Great Sultan goes every Friday to the mosque, surrounded by his solaks, a kind of guards, whose turbans are ornamented with such high feathers that they conceal his person from the sight of the people. When any one has a petition to present to the Sultan, he endeavors to mingle with the guards, and holds up the petition in the air. Sometimes the Sultan deigns to receive it himself, but he oftener orders an aga to take charge of it, and has the petitions brought to him

on his return from the mosque. There is no fear of any one daring to importune him with useless memorials and trifling petitions, as less is written at Constantinople in a whole year than at Paris in one day. There is still less danger of any memorials being presented against the ministers, to whom the Sultan often sends them without reading. Poniatowsky had no other method of conveying the King of Sweden's complaints to the Sultan than this. He drew up a heavy charge against the Gran Vizier. M. de Feriol, then the French ambassador and who gave me an account of the whole affair had the memorial translated into the Turkish tongue. A Greek was hired to present it. This Greek, having mingled with the guards of the Sultan, held up the paper so high for a long time, and made such a noise, that the Sultan observed him, and took the memorial himself.

This method of presenting petitions to the Sultan against his viziers was frequently employed. A Swede, called Leloing, gave in another petition a few days after. Thus in the Turkish empire was Charles XII. reduced to the necessity of employing the same expedients with an oppressed subject.

Some days after this, the Sultan sent the King of Sweden, as the only answer to his complaints, five-and-twenty Arabian horses, one of which had carried his Highness, and was covered with a saddle and trappings enriched with precious stones, and stirrups of massy gold. This present was accompanied with an obliging letter, but expressed in such general terms as led to the suspicion that

the minister had done nothing without the Sultan's consent. Chourlouli-Ali, too, who knew the art of dissembling, sent the king five very remarkable horses. But Charles, with a lofty air, said to the person who brought them, "Return to your master, and tell him I never receive a present from an enemy."

Poniatowsky, having already dared to present a memorial against the Grand Vizier, next formed the bold design of deposing him. He knew that this vizier was disagreeable to the Sultana-mother, and that Kislár *Aga*, the chief of the black eunuchs, and the *aga* of the Janissaries, both hated him. He therefore prompted all three to speak against him. It was something very surprising to see a Christian, a Pole, an uncommissioned agent of the King of Sweden who had taken refuge among the Turks, caballing almost openly at the Porte against the viceroy of the Ottoman empire, who, at the same time, was both an able minister and a favorite of his master. Poniatowsky could never have succeeded, and the idea of such a project alone would have cost him his life, if a power superior to all those that operated in his favor had not given a finishing stroke to the fortune of the Grand Vizier Chourlouli.

The Sultan had a young favorite, who afterwards governed the Ottoman empire, and was killed in Hungary in 1716, at the battle of Peterwaradin, gained over the Turks by Prince Eugene of Savoy. His name was Coumourgi-Ali Pacha. His birth was very little different from that of Chourlouli,

being the son of a coal-heaver, as the name signifies; *coumour* in the Turkish language meaning coal. The Emperor Achmet III., uncle of Achmet II., having met Coumourgi, while yet an infant, in a little wood near Adrianople, was struck with his extreme beauty, and caused him to be conducted to the seraglio. He was beloved by Mustapha, the eldest son and successor of Mahomet; and Achmet III. made him his favorite. He had then no other place but that of *selictar-aga*, sword-bearer of the crown. His extreme youth did not allow him to pretend to the post of Grand Vizier, but yet he had the ambition to aspire to it. The Swedish faction could never win the affections of this favorite. He was never the friend of Charles, nor of any other Christian prince, nor of any of their ministers; but on this occasion he served the king without intending it. He united himself with the Sultanness Validé and the great officers of the Porte to depose Chourlouli, whom they all hated. This old minister, who had long and faithfully served his master, fell a victim to the caprice of a boy and the intrigues of a foreigner. He was stripped of his dignity and riches; his wife, the daughter of the late Sultan Mustapha, was also taken from him; and he himself was banished to Caffa, formerly called Theodosia, in Crim Tartary. The bull, that is to say, the seal of the empire, was given to Numa Couprougli, grandson of the great Couprougli, who took Candia. This new Vizier was, what ill-informed Christians can hardly believe it possible for a Turk to be, a man of inflexible virtue,



a scrupulous observer of the law, and one who frequently opposed justice to the will of the Sultan. He could not endure to hear of a war against Muscovy, which he treated as unjust and unnecessary; but the same attachment to his law that prevented his making war upon the Czar contrary to the faith of treaties, made him respect the duties of hospitality towards the King of Sweden. He would say to his master, "The law forbids you to attack the Czar, who has not offended you; but it commands you to succor the King of Sweden, who is an unfortunate prince in your dominions." Accordingly, he sent Charles eight hundred purses (every purse containing five hundred crowns), and advised him to return peaceably to his own dominions, either through the territories of the Emperor of Germany, or by some of the French vessels which were then in the port of Constantinople, and by which means M. de Feriol, the French ambassador at the Porte, offered to conduct him to Marseilles. Count Poniatowsky negotiated more than ever with this minister, and acquired such an influence in these transactions with an incorruptible Vizier that the gold of the Muscovites was rendered unavailing. The Russian faction thought their best resource was to poison such a dangerous negotiator. They accordingly won over one of his domestics, who was to give him the poison in a dish of coffee; but the crime was discovered before it was carried into execution. The poison was found in the hands of the domestic, contained in a small vial, which was carried to the Sultan. The prisoner was tried

in a full divan, and condemned to the galleys; for the justice of the Turks never punishes with death those crimes which have not been executed.

Charles XII., who could never be persuaded but that, sooner or later, he should be able to engage the Turkish empire in a war against Muscovy, rejected every proposal which was held out for his peaceable return home; and never ceased to represent to the Turks the formidable power of that very Czar whom he had so long despised. His emissaries were perpetually insinuating that Peter Alexiowitz wanted to make himself master of the navigation of the Black Sea; and that, after having subdued the Cossacks, he would carry his arms into Crime Tartary. Sometimes these representations animated the Porte; at others the Russian ministers rendered them of no avail.

While Charles XII. suffered his fate to depend upon the caprice of viziers, and while he was alternately receiving favors and affronts from a foreign power, presenting petitions to the Sultan, and subsisting upon his bounty in a desert, all his enemies, having awakened from their former lethargy, invaded his dominions.

The battle of Pultowa was the first signal for a revolution in Poland. King Augustus returned to that country, protesting against his abdication, and the peace of Altranstad, and publicly accusing Charles, whom he no longer feared, of robbery and cruelty. He immediately imprisoned Fingstein and Imhoff, his plenipotentiaries, who had signed his abdication, as if in so doing they had exceeded

their orders, and betrayed their master. His Saxon troops, which had been the pretext of his dethronement, conducted him back to Warsaw, accompanied by most of the Polish palatines, who had formerly sworn fidelity to him, and had afterwards taken the same oath to Stanislaus, and were now come to do it again to Augustus. Siniawski himself rejoined his party, and, having lost the idea of becoming king, was content to remain grand general of the crown. Fleming, his first minister, who had been obliged to quit Saxony for a time, for fear of being delivered up with Patkul, now contributed by his address to bring back to his master's interest a great part of the Polish nobility.

The Pope absolved the people from the oath of allegiance which they had taken to Stanislaus. This step of the holy father was exceedingly apropos, and, supported by the forces of Augustus, was of considerable weight; it strengthened the credit of the court of Rome in Poland, which had no inclination at that time to contest with the sovereign pontiffs their chimerical right of interfering in the temporal concerns of princes. Every one voluntarily returned to the government of Augustus, and received without repugnance a useless absolution, which the nuncio did not fail to represent as absolutely necessary.

The power of Charles and the grandeur of Sweden were now drawing towards their last period. More than ten crowned heads had long beheld with fear and envy the Swedish power extending itself

far beyond its natural bounds, on the other side of the Baltic sea, from the Duna to the Elbe. The fall of Charles, and his absence, revived the interested views and jealousies of all these powers, which had for a long time been laid asleep by treaties, and by their inability to break them.

The Czar, more powerful than all of them put together, profited by his late victory: he took Wibourg and all Carelia, overran Finland with troops, laid siege to Riga, and sent a body of forces into Poland to aid Augustus in recovering his throne. This emperor was at that time, what Charles had been formerly, the arbiter of Poland and the north; but he consulted only his own interest, while Charles had never hearkened to anything but his ideas of revenge and glory. The Swedish monarch had succored his allies and destroyed his enemies, without reaping the least fruit from his victories; the Czar conducting himself more like a prince, and less like a hero, would not assist the King of Poland but on condition that Livonia should be ceded to him; and that that province, for which Augustus had kindled the war, should remain forever in the possession of the Muscovites.

The King of Denmark, forgetting the treaty of Travendal, as Augustus had that of Altranstad, began from that time to think of making himself master of the duchies of Holstein and Bremen. to which he renewed his pretensions. The King of Prussia had ancient claims upon Swedish Pomerania, which he now resolved to revive. The Duke

of Mecklenburgh saw with envy that the Swedes were still in possession of Wismar, the finest town in the duchy: that prince was to marry a niece of the Russian emperor; and the Czar wanted only a pretext for establishing himself in Germany, after the example of the Swedes. George, Elector of Hanover, sought to enrich himself, on his side, with the spoils of Charles. The Bishop of Munster, too, would have been willing enough to avail himself of some of his claims, had he been able to support them.

Twelve or thirteen thousand Swedes defended Pomerania, and the other countries which Charles possessed in Germany; it was there that the war was most likely to begin. This storm alarmed the emperor and his allies. It is a law of the empire that whoever invades one of its provinces shall be reputed an enemy to the whole Germanic body.

But there was still a greater embarrassment. All these princes, except the Czar, were then united against Louis XIV., whose power, for a long time, had been as formidable to the empire as that of Charles.

Germany, at the beginning of this century, had found itself hard pressed, from south to north, between the armies of France and Sweden. The French had passed the Danube, and the Swedes the Oder; and had their forces, victorious as they then were, been joined together, the empire had been undone. But the same fatality that ruined Sweden had likewise humbled France. Sweden, however,

had still resources left, and Louis carried on the war with vigor, though without success. Had Pomerania and the Duchy of Bremen become the theatre of war, it was to be feared that the empire would suffer by it; and that, being weakened on that side, it would be less able to stand against Louis XIV. To prevent this danger, the Emperor, the princes of the empire, Anne, Queen of England, and the States-General of the United Provinces, concluded, at the end of the year 1709, one of the most singular treaties that ever was signed.

It was stipulated by these powers that the war against the Swedes should not be made in Pomerania, nor in any other of the German provinces, but that the enemies of Charles XII. should be at liberty to attack him anywhere else. The Czar and the King of Poland acceded to this treaty, in which they caused an article to be inserted as extraordinary as the treaty itself. This was that the twelve thousand Swedes who were in Pomerania should not be permitted to leave it to defend their own provinces.

To secure the execution of the treaty, they proposed to raise an army to preserve this imaginary neutrality. This army was to encamp on the banks of the Oder. An unheard-of novelty, surely, to raise an army to prevent a war! Even the princes who were to pay the army were most of them interested in beginning a war which they thus pretended to prevent. The treaty also imported that the army should be composed of the troops of the Emperor, of the King of Prussia, of the Elector of

Hanover, of the Landgrave of Hesse, and of the Bishop of Munster.

The issue of this project was such as might naturally have been expected. It was not carried into execution. The princes who were to have furnished their contingents for completing the army, contributed nothing; there were not two regiments formed. Everybody talked of a neutrality, but nobody observed it; and all the princes of the north, who had any interest in quarrelling with the King of Sweden, were left at full liberty to dispute with each other the spoils of that prince.

At this juncture, the Czar, after having quartered his troops in Lithuania, and having given orders for the siege of Riga, returned to Moscow, to display to his people a sight as new as anything he had hitherto done in the kingdom. This was a triumph of nearly the same nature with that of the ancient Romans. He made his entry into Moscow on the first of January, 1710, under seven triumphal arches, erected in the streets, and adorned with everything which the climate could furnish, or which a flourishing commerce, rendered such by his care, could produce. A regiment of guards began the procession, followed by the pieces of artillery taken from the Swedes at Lesno and Pultowa, each being drawn by eight horses, covered with scarlet trappings hanging down to the ground. Then came the standards, kettledrums, and colors, won at those two battles, carried by the very officers and soldiers who had taken them; and all these spoils were followed by the choicest troops of the Czar. After

they had filed off, there appeared in a chariot, made on purpose, the litter of Charles XII., found on the battlefield of Pultowa, all shattered with two cannon shot; behind this litter marched all the prisoners, two and two. Amongst them appeared Count Piper, first minister of Sweden, the celebrated Marshal Renschild, the Count de Lewenhaupt, the Generals Slipenback, Stackelberg, and Hamilton, and all the officers who were afterwards dispersed through Great Russia. Immediately after these appeared the Czar himself, mounted on the same horse which he rode at the battle of Pultowa. A little after him came the generals who had shared in the success of the day. Then followed another regiment of guards; and the wagons loaded with Swedish ammunition closed the whole.

This pageantry was accompanied with the ringing of all the bells in Moscow, with the sound of drums, kettledrums, trumpets; and an infinite number of musical instruments were heard alternately with the salute of two hundred pieces of cannon, and the acclamations of five hundred thousand men, who, at every pause the Czar made in this triumphal entry, cried out, "Long live the Emperor our father."

This dazzling exhibition augmented the people's veneration for his person, and perhaps made him appear greater in their eyes than the real advantages they had derived from him. Meanwhile he continued the blockade of Riga. His generals made themselves masters of the rest of Livonia, and part of Finland. At the same time the King



of Denmark came with his whole fleet to make a descent upon Sweden, where he landed seventeen thousand men. These he left under the command of the Count de Reventlouw.

Sweden was at that time governed by a regency composed of several senators, whom the king appointed when he departed from Stockholm. The body of the senate, looking upon the government as *their* right, became jealous of the regency. The state suffered by these divisions: but when, after the battle of Pultowa, the first news they heard at Stockholm was that the king was at Bender at the mercy of the Turks and Tartars, and that the Danes had disembarked in Schonen, and taken the town of Helsimborg, their jealousies vanished, and they turned their whole attention to the preservation of their country. Sweden was now drained, in a great measure, of regular troops; for though Charles had always made his great expeditions at the head of small armies, yet the innumerable battles he had fought in the space of nine years, the necessity he was under of continually recruiting his forces, the maintaining his garrisons, and the standing army he was constantly obliged to keep in Finland, Ingria, Livonia, Pomerania, Bremen, and Verden, had cost Sweden, during the course of the war, above two hundred and fifty thousand men; so that there did not remain eight thousand of the old troops, which, with the newly raised militia, were the only resources Sweden had.

The nation is naturally warlike; and every people insensibly adopts the disposition of its king. They

talked of nothing, from one end of the country to the other, but the prodigious achievements of Charles and his generals, and of the old regiments that fought under them at Narva, Duna, Clissau, Pultusk, and Hollosin. The lowest of the Swedes acquired from them a spirit of emulation and glory. Their affection for their king, their pity for his misfortunes, and their implacable hatred of the Danes, contributed to increase this ardor. In several other countries the peasants are slaves, or treated as such; but here they compose a part of the state, are considered as citizens, and consequently are capable of more refined sentiments; so that this new raised militia became, in a short time, the best troops of the north.

General Steinbock put himself, by order of the regency, at the head of eight thousand of the old troops, and about twelve thousand of these new militia, to go in pursuit of the Danes, who ravaged all the country about Helsimbürg, and had already laid contributions on some of the more inland provinces.

There was neither time nor opportunity to give clothing to the new militia, so that most of these peasants came in their coarse linen frocks, having pistols tied to their girdles with cords. Steinbock, at the head of this extraordinary army, overtook the Danes, about three leagues from Helsimbürg, on the 10th of March, 1710. He wished to have given his troops a few days' rest, to raise entrenchments, and to allow his new soldiers a sufficient time to accustom themselves to behold the enemy;

but all the peasants called out for battle the very day they arrived.

Several of the officers then present have since assured me that they saw every soldier foaming with rage and anger, so great is the national hatred of the Swedes to the Danes. Steinbock profited by this ardor of their minds, which, in the day of battle, is of as much consequence as military discipline, and attacked the Danes. A circumstance was now displayed, of which, perhaps, the whole history of mankind cannot furnish above two examples; the new-raised militia, in their first assault, equalled the intrepidity of veteran soldiers. Two regiments of these ill-armed peasants cut in pieces the regiment of the King of Denmark's guards, of which there remained only ten men alive.

The Danes, entirely defeated, retired under the cannon of Helsimburg. The passage from Sweden to Zealand is so short that the King of Denmark received the news at Copenhagen of the defeat of his army in Sweden the very same day on which it happened, and sent his fleet to bring off the shattered remains of his army. The Danes quitted Sweden with precipitation five days after the battle; but being unable to carry off their horses, and unwilling to leave them to the enemy, they killed them all in the environs of Helsimburg, and set fire to their provisions, burning their corn and baggage, and leaving in Helsimburg four thousand wounded men, of whom the greatest part died from the malaria occasioned by so many dead horses, and for want of provisions, of which even their countrymen

deprived them, to prevent the Swedes enjoying it. At the same time the peasants of Dalecarlia, having in the depths of their forests heard the report of their king's being a prisoner among the Turks, sent a deputation to the regency of Stockholm, and offered to go at their own expense, to the number of twenty thousand, and deliver their master from the hands of his enemies. This proposal, which was better calculated to display their courage and affection to their king, than to produce any real advantage, was received with pleasure, though it was not accepted; and the senators took care to acquaint the king with it, at the same time they sent him an account of the battle of Helsimbürg.

Charles received this pleasing news in his camp near Bender, in the month of July, 1710; and a little time after another event happened which contributed still more to strengthen his hopes.

The grand vizier Couprougli, who opposed all his designs, was deposed about two months after he had entered into his office. The little court of Charles XII., and those who still adhered to him in Poland, gave out that Charles made and unmade the viziers, and governed the Turkish empire from his retreat at Bender; but he had no share in the disgrace of that favorite. The rigid probity of the vizier is said to have been the sole cause of his fall. His predecessor had not paid the janissaries out of the imperial treasury, but with the money he had raised by extortion: Couprougli paid them out of the treasury. Achmet reproached him with preferring the interest of the subject to that of the

emperor: "Your predecessor, Chourlouli," said he, "knew how to find other means to pay my troops." "If," replied the grand vizier, "he had the art of enriching your highness by rapine, it is an art of which I glory to be ignorant."

The profound secrecy observed in the seraglio seldom permits such particulars to transpire to the public: but this fact was published at the same time with Couprougli's disgrace. This vizier's boldness, however, did not cost him his head, because true virtue can frequently cause itself to be respected, even by those whom it offends. He was permitted to retire to the island of Negropont. These particulars I learned from the letters of M. Bru, my relation, first interpreter to the Ottoman Porte, and I have related them in order to display the true spirit of that government.

After this the Grand Seignior recalled from Aleppo Baltagi Mehemet, Pacha of Syria, who had been grand vizier before Chourlouli. The *baltagis* of the seraglio, so called from *balta*, which signifies an axe, are slaves employed to cut wood for the use of the princes of the Ottoman blood and the sultanas. This vizier had been a baltagi in his youth, and had ever since retained the name of that office, according to the custom of the Turks, who take, without blushing, the name of their first profession, or that of their father, or even the place of their birth.

At the time Baltagi Mehemet was a slave in the seraglio, he was so happy as to do several little services to Prince Achmet, who was then a

prisoner of state in the reign of his brother Mustapha. It is permitted the princes of the Ottoman blood to keep for their pleasure a few women who are past the age of child-bearing (an age that arrives very early in Turkey), but still handsome enough to please. As soon as Achmet became sultan, he gave one of these female slaves, whom he had ardently loved, in marriage to Baltagi Mehemet. This woman, by her intrigues, made her husband grand vizier; another intrigue displaced him; and a third made him grand vizier again.

When Baltagi Mehemet came to receive the bull of the empire, he found the party of the King of Sweden prevailing in the seraglio. The Sultanness Validé; Ali-Coumourgi, the favorite of the Grand Seignior; the Kislár-Aga, chief of the black eunuchs; and the aga of the janissaries, inclined to a war with the Czar: the sultan was determined in the same resolution; and the first order he gave the grand vizier was to go and attack the Muscovites with two hundred thousand men. Baltagi Mehemet had never made a campaign, yet he was not the idiot that Swedish malcontents have represented him. He said to the Grand Seignior, upon receiving a sabre from him adorned with precious stones, "Your highness knows that I was brought up to handle an axe to cleave wood, and not a sword to command your armies: I will, notwithstanding, do my best to serve you; though I should not succeed, remember I have entreated you beforehand not to impute the blame to me." The

Sultan assured him of his friendship, and the vizier prepared to carry his orders into execution.

The first step of the Ottoman Porte was to imprison the Russian ambassador in the castle of the Seven Towers. It is the custom of the Turks to begin by arresting the ministers of those princes against whom they declare war. Although strict observers of hospitality in every thing else, in this they violate the most sacred law of nations. They commit this act of injustice under the pretext of equity, believing, or at least desirous to have it thought, that they never undertake any but just wars, because they are consecrated by the approbation of their mufti. Upon this principle they take up arms, as they imagine, to chastise the breakers of treaties, of which they themselves are often the first violators; and think they have a right to punish the ambassadors of those kings with whom they are at enmity, as being accomplices in the treachery of their masters.

To this manner of reasoning they join a ridiculous contempt, which they affect to entertain for Christian princes and their ambassadors, the latter of whom they consider in no other light than as the consuls of merchants.

The Han of Crim Tartary, whom we call the Kam, received orders to hold himself in readiness with forty thousand Tartars. This prince governs Nagai Budziack, part of Circassia, and all Crim Tartary; a province known in antiquity by the name of Taurica Chersonesus, into which the Greeks carried their arms and commerce, and

founded powerful cities, and into which the Genoese since penetrated when they were masters of the trade of Europe. In this country are to be seen the ruins of some Greek cities, and some monuments of the Genoese, which still subsist in the midst of desolation and barbarism.

The Kam is called emperor by his own subjects; but this grand title does not make him less a slave of the Porte. The Ottoman blood, from which the Kams are sprung, and the right they pretend to the empire of the Turks, in case an heir should be wanting to the throne, render their family respectable, and their persons formidable even to the Sultan himself. This is the reason that the Grand Seignior dares not venture to destroy the race of the Kams of Tartary, though indeed he seldom allows any of these princes to reign to a great age. Their conduct is closely inspected by the neighboring pachas, their dominions are surrounded with janissaries, their inclinations thwarted by the grand viziers, and their designs always suspected. If the Tartars complain of the Kam, the Porte deposes him under that pretext; if he is too much beloved by his people, that is still a higher crime, for which he is most certainly punished. Thus, almost all of them are driven from sovereign power into exile, and end their days at Rhodes, which is generally their prison and their grave.

The Tartars, their subjects, are the greatest thieves on earth, and what appears impossible, are at the same time the most hospitable people. They will go fifty leagues to attack a caravan, or pillage a



village; yet when any stranger, of any rank whatever, happens to pass through their country, he is not only received, lodged and maintained everywhere, but through whatever places he passes, the inhabitants dispute with each other the honor of having him for their guest; and the master of the house, his wife and daughters are ambitious to serve him. This inviolable regard to hospitality they have inherited from their ancestors, the Scythians, and they still preserve it on account of the small number of strangers that travel among them, and the low prices of all sorts of provisions, which render the practice of such a virtue not exceedingly burdensome.

When the Tartars go to war in conjunction with the Ottoman army, they are maintained by the Sultan, but the booty they get is their only pay; and hence it is that they are much fitter for plundering than fighting.

The Kam, won over by the presents and intrigues of the King of Sweden, at first had obtained leave to appoint the general rendezvous of the troops at Bender, and even under the eye of Charles, in order to convince that monarch that the war was undertaken solely for his sake.

The new vizier, Baltagi Mehemet, not lying under the same engagements, would not flatter a foreign prince so highly. He changed this disposition, and assembled this great army at Adrianople, on whose vast and fertile plains the Turks usually draw up their armies when going to make war upon the Christians. There the troops that arrive from Asia

and Africa repose and refresh themselves for a few weeks. But the Grand Vizier, in order to be beforehand with the Czar, allowed the army but three days' rest, and then marched to the Danube, and from thence to Bessarabia.

The Turkish troops at this day are not so formidable as they were in ancient times, when they conquered so many kingdoms in Asia, Africa, and Europe; when, by the strength of their body, their valor, and numbers, they triumphed over enemies less powerful and worse disciplined than themselves. But now that the Christians are more expert in the art of war, in a pitched battle they almost always beat the Turks, and even with unequal numbers. If the Ottoman empire has made some conquests, it has been only over the republic of Venice, more esteemed for wisdom than for war, defended by strangers, and little succored by the Christian princes, who are always divided among themselves.

The janissaries and spahis make their attack in a disorderly manner, incapable of attending to the commands of their general, or rallying themselves. Their cavalry, which ought to be excellent, considering the goodness and activity of their horses, is not able to withstand the shock of the German horse; and their infantry did not yet know how to make use of fixed bayonets. Beside all this, the Turks have not had an able general since the time of Couprougli, who conquered the isle of Candia. A slave brought up in the idleness and solitude of a seraglio, made a vizier through favor and a general against his will, is now seen conducting an

army raised in a hurry, without discipline or experience, against Russian troops, hardened by twelve years' war, and proud of having conquered the Swedes.

The Czar, to all appearance, must have vanquished Baltagi Mehemet; but he was guilty of the same fault with regard to the Turks which the King of Sweden had committed with respect to himself: he despised his enemy too much. On the first news of the Turkish preparations, he left Moscow, and, having given orders for turning the siege of Riga into a blockade, assembled eighty thousand men on the frontiers of Poland. With this army he took the road through Moldavia and Wallachia, formerly the country of the Dacians, but now inhabited by Greek Christians, tributaries to the Sultan.

Moldavia was at that time governed by Prince Cantemir, of Greek extraction, who united in his person the talents of the ancient Greeks, and the knowledge of letters and of arms. He was supposed to have descended from the famous Timur, known by the name of Tamerlane. This origin appearing more honorable than a Greek one, they attempt to prove the reality of the descent by the name of this conqueror. *Timur*, say they, resembles *Temir*; the title of *Kam*, which Timur possessed before he conquered Asia, is included in the word *Cantemir*; therefore, Prince Cantemir is descended from Tamerlane. Such are the foundations of most genealogies!

But from whatever family Cantemir descended,

he owed all his fortune to the Ottoman Porte. Yet scarcely had he received the investiture of his principality, when he betrayed the Turkish emperor, his benefactor, to the Czar, from whom he expected greater advantages. He flattered himself that the conqueror of Charles XII. would easily triumph over a vizier of so little reputation, who had never made a campaign, and who had chosen for his *kiaia*—that is to say, his lieutenant—the superintendent of the Customs in Turkey. He made no doubt that all the Greeks would readily follow his standard, as the Greek patriarchs had encouraged him in his revolt. The Czar, therefore, having made a secret treaty with this prince, and received him into his army, advanced into the country; and in the month of June, 1711, arrived on the northern banks of the river Hierasus, now Pruth, near Jassy, the capital of Moldavia.

As soon as the Grand Vizier heard that Peter Alexiowitz was advancing on that side, he immediately quitted his camp, and, following the course of the Danube, resolved to cross the river on a bridge of boats, near to a town called Saccia, at the same place where Darius formerly built a bridge that went by his name. The Turkish army used such diligence that they soon came in sight of the Muscovites, the river Pruth lying between them.

The Czar, sure of the Prince of Moldavia, never thought that the Moldavians would fail him. But the prince and his subjects have very often different interests. The Moldavians preferred the Turkish government, which is never fatal to the great, and

which affects a great lenity and mildness to its tributary states. They dreaded the Christians, and especially the Muscovites, who had always treated them with inhumanity. They therefore carried all their provisions to the Ottoman army; the contractors, also, who had engaged to furnish the Russians with provisions, executed in favor of the Grand Vizier the very agreement which they had made with the Czar. The Wallachians, neighbors to the Moldavians, exhibited the same attachment to the Turks; so much had the remembrance of the Russian cruelties alienated all their minds.

The Czar thus deceived in his hopes, which perhaps he had too eagerly entertained, saw his army on a sudden destitute of forage and provisions. The soldiers deserted in troops, and his army was soon reduced to less than thirty thousand men ready to perish with hunger. The Czar experienced the same misfortunes upon the banks of the Pruth, in having trusted himself to Cantemir, as Charles XII. had done at Pultowa, in relying upon Mazeppa. Meanwhile, the Turks passed the river, hemmed in the Russians, and formed an entrenched camp before them. It is surprising that the Czar did not dispute their passage, or at least repair this error by attacking the Turks immediately after their landing, instead of giving them time to destroy his army with hunger and fatigue. It would seem, indeed, that Peter did everything in this campaign to hasten his own ruin. He found himself without provisions, having the river Pruth behind him, a hundred and fifty thousand Turks before him, and

forty thousand Tartars continually harassing his army on the right and left. In this extremity he openly said, "Here am I at least in as bad a situation as my brother Charles was at Pultowa."

Count Poniatowsky, an indefatigable agent of the King of Sweden, was in the Grand Vizier's army, together with some Poles and Swedes, who all imagined the ruin of the Czar to be inevitable.

As soon as Poniatowsky saw that the armies must infallibly come to an engagement, he sent to the King of Sweden, who immediately set out from Bender, accompanied by forty officers, enjoying in idea the pleasure he should have in fighting the Emperor of Muscovy. After many losses and several destructive marches, the Czar was driven back to the Pruth, having no other entrenchment than a *chevaux de frise* and a few wagons. A few troops of the janissaries and spahis attacked his army so disadvantageously situated; but their attack was disorderly, and the Russians defended themselves with a firmness which the presence of their prince, added to their despair, gave them.

The Turks were twice repulsed. Next day Poniatowsky advised the Grand Vizier to starve the Russian army, which, being in want of everything, would be obliged in a day's time to surrender at discretion.

The Czar has since that time more than once declared that in his whole life he never felt anything so tormenting as the agitation in which he passed the night. He revolved in his thoughts that all he had been doing for so many years to promote

the glory and happiness of his country—that so many grand undertakings, which had been always interrupted by wars—were now perhaps going to perish with him, before they were fully accomplished; and that he must either be destroyed by famine, or attack about a hundred and eighty thousand men with feeble and dispirited troops, diminished one half in their number, the cavalry almost entirely dismounted, and the infantry exhausted with hunger and fatigue.

In the beginning of the night he had sent for General Czeremetoff, and ordered him without deliberation, or taking his opinion, to have everything in readiness at the break of day for attacking the Turks with fixed bayonets.

He likewise gave the most positive orders that all the baggage should be burnt, and that every officer should keep but one wagon, in order that, if they were conquered, the enemy might not obtain the booty they expected.

Having arranged everything with the general for the battle, he retired to his tent, oppressed with grief and agitated with convulsions, a disorder with which he was often attacked, and which always recurred with redoubled violence when he was under any perturbation of mind. He gave orders that no one should dare to enter his tent in the night on any pretext whatever—not choosing to receive any remonstrance against a resolution which, though desperate, was necessary; and still less that any one should be a witness of the distressed situation in which he found himself.

In the meantime, the greatest part of the baggage was burnt, as he had ordered. The whole army followed the example, though with much reluctance; and several buried their most valuable effects in the earth. The general officers had already given orders for the march, and were endeavoring to inspire the army with that confidence which they themselves wanted; but the whole soldiery exhausted with hunger and fatigue, marched without spirit or hope. The women, with which the army was needlessly crowded, set up the most lamentable cries, which contributed still more to enervate the men; and next morning every one expected death or slavery as the only alternative. This description is by no means exaggerated; it is exactly conformable to the accounts that were given by officers who served in the army.

There was at that time in the Russian camp a woman as extraordinary, perhaps, as the Czar himself. She was then only known by the name of Catherine. Her mother was a poor country woman called Erb-Magden, of the village of Ringen, in Esthonia, a province where the people were serfs or glebe-slaves, and which was then under the government of the Swedes. She never discovered her father, and had been baptized by the name of Martha. The vicar of the parish, out of charity, brought her up to the age of fourteen, when she went to service at Marienburg, at the house of a Lutheran minister called Gluk.

In 1702, being then eighteen years of age, she married a Swedish dragoon. The day after her



marriage, a party of the Swedish troops having been beaten by the Muscovites, the dragoon, who was in the action, was missing, nor could his wife discover whether he had been made prisoner, nor, indeed, could she learn at any time afterwards what had become of him.

A few days after she was made a prisoner herself by General Baur; in whose service she stayed some time; and afterwards in that of Marshal Czeremetoff, by whom she was given to Menzikoff, a man who experienced the greatest vicissitudes of fortune, having been raised from a pastry-cook's boy to the rank of a general and prince, but who was at last stripped of every honor, and banished into Siberia, where he died in misery and despair.

It was at a supper given by Prince Menzikoff that the emperor first saw her, and instantly became enamored of her. He married her privately in the year 1707; not because he was captivated by her female artifices, but because in her he thought he had met with a woman capable of seconding his schemes, and even of maintaining them after his death. He had long before divorced his first wife Ottokesa, the daughter of a Boyard, who was accused of opposing the alterations which he made in his dominions; a crime in the eyes of the Czar the most unpardonable, as he would suffer nobody in his family whose thoughts did not agree with his own. He thought he had now found in this foreign slave the qualities of a sovereign, though she had none of the virtues of her sex; he, however, for her sake, disdained the prejudices that

would have governed a man of common ideas, and therefore had her crowned empress. The same talents which made her the wife of Peter Alexiowitz procured her the empire after the death of her husband. Europe beheld with surprise this woman, who was never able to read or write, \* compensating for her want of education and failings by her firmness, and filling with glory the throne of a legislator.

At the time she married the Czar she renounced the Lutheran religion, in which she had been born, for that of Muscovy; in which religion she was rebaptized according to the rites of the Russian church, and instead of the name of Martha she took that of Catherine, by which she was ever after known. This woman happening to be in the camp at Pruth, held a council with the general officers and the vice-chancellor Schaffirof while the Czar was in his tent.

In this conference it was resolved to ask a peace of the Turks, and endeavor to persuade the Czar to agree to it. The vice-chancellor wrote a letter to

\* The *Sieur de la Mottraye* pretends that she had a good education, and could both read and write very well. The contrary of this is known to all the world. The peasants of Livonia are never permitted to learn either to read or write, owing to an ancient privilege, which is termed the benefit of clergy, formerly established among the barbarians who were converted to Christianity, and still subsisting in this country. The memoirs from which this anecdote is taken further add that the Princess Elizabeth, afterwards empress, always signed for her mother, from the time she could write.

the grand vizier in his master's name, which letter the Czarina carried into the emperor's tent, notwithstanding his prohibition; and having by tears and entreaties prevailed upon him to sign it, she immediately collected all her jewels, money, and most valuable effects, and even borrowed of the general officers. This sum on being collected formed a considerable present, which she then sent with the letter signed by the Czar to Osman Aga, lieutenant to the grand vizier. Mehemet Baltagi at first answered with the lofty air of a vizier and a conqueror, "Let the Czar send me his prime minister, and I shall then consider what is to be done." The vice-chancellor Schaffirof, upon this, immediately set off to the Turkish camp, provided with some presents, which he publicly offered to the grand vizier, and which were sufficient to show him they stood in need of his clemency, but too inconsiderable to corrupt his integrity.

The first demand the vizier made was that the Czar should surrender at discretion with the whole army. The vice-chancellor replied that his master was going to attack him in a quarter of an hour, and that the Russians would perish to a man rather than submit to such infamous conditions. Osman joined his remonstrances to the demand of Schaffirof.

Mehemet Baltagi was no warrior; he saw that the janissaries had been repulsed the evening before, so that Osman easily prevailed on him not to expose such certain advantages to the hazard of a battle. He therefore granted a temporary suspen-

sion of hostilities for six hours, during which time they should agree upon the conditions of the treaty.

During the parley there happened a little incident which may serve to show that the Turks often pay more regard to their word than is generally imagined. Two Italian gentlemen, relations of M. Brillo, lieutenant-colonel of a regiment of grenadiers in the Czar's service, having gone in quest of forage, were taken prisoners by some Tartars, who brought them to the camp, and offered to sell them to an officer of the janissaries. The Turk, enraged at their daring to violate the truce, arrested the Tartars, and carried them himself before the grand vizier, together with the two prisoners.

The vizier sent back the two gentlemen to the Czar's camp, and ordered the Tartars who had been chiefly concerned in the transaction to be beheaded.

In the meantime the Kam of Tartary opposed the conclusion of the treaty, which would deprive him of all hopes of plunder. Poniatowsky seconded the Kam with the most persuasive arguments; but Osman carried his point against the importunity of the Tartar and the persuasive eloquence of Poniatowsky.

The vizier thought that by concluding an advantageous peace he should sufficiently serve his master. He insisted that the Muscovites should deliver up Asoph, burn their galleys which lay in that harbor, demolish the important citadels built upon the Palus Mæotis (Sea of Azov), and give the cannon and ammunition of all those fortresses into the hands of

the Sultan ; that the Czar should withdraw his troops from Poland ; that he should not incommode the small number of Cossacks that were under the protection of the Poles, nor those who depended on the Turks ; and that for the future he should pay the Tartars a subsidy of forty thousand sequins a year ; a disagreeable tribute imposed a long time past, but from which the Czar had delivered his country.

At last the treaty was going to be signed without so much as making mention of the King of Sweden. All that Poniatowsky could obtain of the vizier was to insert an article, by which the Czar engaged not to incommode Charles in his return ; and what is very remarkable, it was stipulated in this article that the Czar and the King of Sweden should be at liberty to make peace if they wished it, and if they could agree upon the conditions.

On these conditions the Czar was permitted to retire with his army, cannon, artillery, colors, and baggage. The Turks furnished him with provisions, so that he had plenty of everything in his camp two hours after the signing of the treaty, which was begun, concluded, and signed the twenty first day of July, 1711.

Just as the Czar, now extricated from this terrible dilemma, was marching off with drums beating and colors flying, the King of Sweden arrived, impatient for the fight, and to behold his enemy in his power. He had ridden from Bender to Jassy, about a hundred and fifty miles. He arrived the very moment the Russians were beginning to retire in peace ; but he could not penetrate to the Turkish

camp without passing the Pruth by a bridge nine miles distant. Charles, who never did anything like other men, swam across the river, at the hazard of being drowned, and traversed the Russian camp at the risk of being taken; he, however, reached the Turkish army, and alighted at the tent of Poniatowsky, who has related this fact to me both in conversation and in his correspondence. The count came to him with a melancholy air, and told him he had lost an opportunity which perhaps he would never be able to recover.

The king, fired with resentment, ran immediately to the tent of the grand vizier, and with an inflamed countenance reproached him with the treaty he had concluded. "I have a right," said the grand vizier with a calm air, "to make peace or war." "But," added the king, "had you not the whole Russian army in your power?" "Our law orders," answered the vizier gravely, "to give peace to our enemies when they implore our mercy." "And does it command you," resumed the king in a passion, "to make a bad treaty, when you may impose what laws you please? Were you not bound to lead the Czar prisoner to Constantinople?"

The Turk, driven to extremity, replied drily, "And who would have governed his empire in his absence? It is not proper that all kings should leave their dominions." Charles made no other answer than by a smile of indignation. He then threw himself down upon a sofa, and, eyeing the vizier with an air of contempt and resentment, stretched out his leg, and entangling his spur in

the Turk's robe, purposely tore it; after which he rose up, remounted his horse, and with despair in his heart returned to Bender.

Poniatowsky continued some time longer with the grand vizier to try if he could prevail upon him, by more gentle means, to extort greater concessions from the Czar; but the hour of prayer had come, and the Turk, without answering a single word, went to wash and say his prayers.

## BOOK VI.

**Intrigues at the Ottoman Porte—The Kam of Tartary and the Pacha of Bender endeavor to force Charles to depart—He defends himself with forty Domestics against a whole Army—Is taken and treated as a prisoner.**

THE fortune of the King of Sweden, so changed from what it had been, persecuted him even in the most trivial circumstances. He found, on his return, his little camp at Bender, and all his apartments, overflowed by the waters of the Dnister; he therefore retired to the distance of a few miles, near to the village called Varnitza; and, as if he had had a secret foreboding of what was to befall him, he built there a large house of stone, capable, on occasion, to sustain an assault for some hours. He even furnished it magnificently, contrary to his usual custom, in order to command respect from the Turks.

He likewise built two other houses, one for his chancery, and the other for his favorite Grothusen, who kept a table at the king's expense. While



the king was thus employed in building near Bender, as if he had intended always to remain in Turkey, Baltagi Mehemet, dreading more than ever his intrigues and complaints at the Porte, had sent the ambassador of the Emperor of Germany to Vienna to demand a free passage for the King of Sweden through the hereditary dominions of the House of Austria. The envoy returned in three weeks with a promise from the imperial regency that the honors which were due to Charles XII. should be duly paid, and that he should be safely conducted to Pomerania.

Application was made to the regency of Vienna, because Charles, the Emperor of Germany who had succeeded Joseph, was then in Spain disputing the crown of that kingdom with Philip V. While the German envoy was executing this commission at Vienna, the grand vizier sent three pachas to the King of Sweden to inform him that he must quit the Turkish dominions.

The king, who had been apprised of the orders with which they were charged, caused immediate notice to be given to them that if they presumed to make him any proposals contrary to his honor, or to the respect which was due to him, he would have them all three hanged that very moment. The Pacha of Thessalonica, who delivered the message, disguised the harshness of the commission under the most respectful terms. Charles brought the audience to a close without deigning to return the least answer. His chancellor, Mültern, who remained with the three pachas, briefly

explained to them his master's refusal, which already they sufficiently comprehended by his silence.

The grand vizier did not give up the point; he ordered Ismael Pacha, the new Seraskier of Bender, to threaten the king with the Sultan's indignation if he did not make up his mind without delay. This seraskier was a man of a mild temper and engaging address, which had gained him the goodwill of Charles, and the friendship of all the Swedes. The king entered into conference with him: but it was only to tell him that he would not depart till Achmet had granted him two demands: the punishment of his grand vizier, and a hundred thousand men to return with him into Poland.

Baltagi Mehemet knew very well that Charles remained in Turkey only to ruin him; he took care to plant guards along all the roads from Bender to Constantinople to intercept the king's letters. He did more, he retrenched his "thaim," that is to say, the provision with which the Porte furnishes those sovereigns to whom she grants an asylum. That of the king of Sweden was immense, consisting of five hundred crowns a day in money (£100), and a profusion of everything that could contribute to maintain a court in splendor and affluence.

As soon as the king understood that the vizier had presumed to retrench his allowance, he turned to the steward of his household, and said, "Hitherto you have only had two tables, but I command you have four from to-morrow."

The officers of Charles XII. were accustomed to

esteem nothing impossible which their master ordered; at present, however, they had neither money nor provisions, and were obliged to borrow at twenty, thirty, and forty per cent. of the officers, domestics, and janissaries, who were grown rich by the profusion of the king. M. Fabricius the envoy of Holstein, Jeffreys the minister of England, with their secretaries and friends, gave all that they had. The king, with his usual stateliness, and without any concern for the future, subsisted on these gifts, which could not have sufficed him long. It was therefore necessary to elude the vigilance of the guards, and to send secretly to Constantinople to borrow money of the European merchants. All refused to lend money to a king who seemed to put himself out of a condition ever to repay them. One English merchant alone, named Cook, ventured to lend him about forty thousand crowns, being content to lose them in case of the King of Sweden's death. This money was brought to the king's little camp just as they began to be in want of everything, and without hopes of any relief.

In this interval M. Poniatowsky wrote, from the very camp of the grand vizier, a relation of the campaign at Pruth, in which he accused Baltagi Mehemet of cowardice and treachery. An old janissary, provoked at the weakness of the vizier, and bribed moreover by the presents of Poniatowsky, undertook to deliver this account, and having obtained leave of absence, presented the letter with his own hand to the Sultan.

Poniatowsky, a few days after, left the camp,

and repaired to the Ottoman Porte to form intrigues against the grand vizier, according to his usual custom.

Circumstances were favorable. The Czar, finding himself at liberty, did not hurry himself to perform his engagements; the keys of Azoph did not arrive; the grand vizier, who was answerable for them, and who, with reason, dreaded the indignation of his master, did not dare to appear in his presence.

The seraglio at that time was filled more than ever with intrigues and factions. These cabals, which exist in all courts, and which in European courts commonly end with the dismissal of the minister, or at most in his banishment, never fail at Constantinople to occasion the loss of more than one head. They proved fatal to the old vizier Chourlouli, and to Osman, that lieutenant of Baltagi Mehemet who was the principal author of the peace of Pruth, and had afterwards obtained a considerable post at the Porte. Among Osman's treasures were found the Czarina's ring, and twenty thousand pieces of gold of the Saxon and Russian coin, which was a proof that money alone had saved the Czar of Muscovy from the precipice, and ruined the hopes of Charles XII. The vizier Baltagi Mehemet was banished to the Isle of Lemnos, where he died three years after. The Sultan did not seize his effects either at his banishment or at his death. He was far from being rich, and his poverty is a justification of his character.

To this grand vizier succeeded Jussuff, that is to

say, Joseph, whose fortune was as extraordinary as that of his predecessors. He was born on the frontiers of Muscovy, was taken prisoner at six years of age, together with his family, and had been sold to a janissary. He had been for some time a servant in the seraglio, and at last became the second person in that very empire wherein he had been a slave; but he was only the shadow of a minister. The young Selictar-Ali-Coumourgi elevated him to that slippery post only while he waited for an occasion to fill it himself; and Jus-suff, his creature, had nothing to do but to set the seals of the empire to the will of this favorite. The politics of the Ottoman court seemed to undergo a total alteration, from the very beginning of this vizier's administration. The Czar's plenipoten-tiaries, who remained at Constantinople, both as ambassadors and as hostages, were treated better than ever; the grand vizier confirmed with them the peace of Pruth: but that which mortified the King of Sweden above all was, to hear that the secret alliance made with the Czar at Constantino-ple was brought about by the mediation of the ambassadors of England and Holland.

Constantinople, since the time of Charles's re-treat to Bender, had become what Rome had so often been before, the centre of the negotiations of Christendom. Count des Alleurs, the French am-bassador, supported here the interests of Charles and Stanislaus; the Emperor of Germany's minister opposed them; and the same contentions prevailed here between the Swedish and Muscovite factions,

with which the court of Rome was so long agitated by France and Spain.

England and Holland, who seemed to be neutrals, were not so in reality; the new commerce which the Czar had opened to Petersburg attracted the attention of these two commercial nations.

The English and Dutch will always be in favor of that power that most furthers their trade. There was much to be obtained from the Czar, and therefore it is not surprising that the ministers of England and Holland should serve him secretly at the Ottoman Porte. One of the conditions of this new alliance was, that Charles should be immediately obliged to quit the Turkish empire. Whether it was that the Czar hoped to seize his person on the road, or that he thought Charles less formidable in his own kingdom than in Turkey, where he was always on the point of arming the Ottoman troops against the Russian empire, may be inferred.

The King of Sweden was now continually soliciting the Porte to send him back through Poland with a numerous army; but the divan,\* had actually resolved to accomplish the same purpose with a simple guard of seven or eight thousand men, treating him not as a king whom they wished to assist, but as a guest whom they wanted to get rid of. For this purpose the Sultan Achmet wrote to him a letter concluding in these terms :

“ You must therefore prepare to depart under the auspices of Providence, and with an honorable

\* The divan is the great council of the empire.

guard, before the approaching winter, in order to return to your own territories, taking care to pass as a friend through those of Poland. And whatever shall be necessary for your journey shall be furnished you by my Sublime Porte, as well in money as in men, horses, and wagons.

“19th April, 1712.”

This letter did not yet deprive the King of Sweden of his hopes; he wrote to the Sultan, that he should ever retain a grateful remembrance of the favors his highness had bestowed on him, but that he believed he was too just to send him back with the simple guard of a flying camp into a country still overrun by the Czar's troops. In effect, the Emperor of Russia, notwithstanding the first article of the peace of the Pruth, by which he engaged himself to withdraw all his troops from Poland, had sent fresh supplies into that kingdom; and, what appears surprising, the Grand Seignior knew nothing of the matter.

The bad policy of the Porte in having always, through vanity, ambassadors from the Christian princes at Constantinople, and not maintaining a single agent at the Christian courts, is the cause that these discover and sometimes conduct the most secret resolutions of the Sultan, and that the divan is always in profound ignorance of what is publicly going on in the Christian world.

The Sultan, shut up in his seraglio among his women and eunuchs, can see only with the eyes of the grand vizier; that minister, as inaccessible as

his master, wholly engrossed with the intrigues of the seraglio, and having no foreign correspondence, is commonly deceived himself, or else deceives the Sultan, who deposes, or orders him to be strangled for the first fault, in order to choose another minister as ignorant or as perfidious, who behaves like his predecessors, and soon shares the same fate.

Such, for the most part, is the inactivity and the profound security of this court, that were the Christian courts to league themselves against it, their fleets might be at the Dardanelles, and their land forces at the gates of Adrianople, before the Turks would dream of defending themselves; but the different interests which will ever divide the Christian world, will preserve the Turks from a fate to which, by their want of policy, and by their ignorance of the art of war both by sea and land, they seem at present exposed.

Achmet was so little informed of what passed in Poland, that he sent an aga to see whether it was true that the Czar's troops were still in that country: the King of Sweden's two secretaries, who understood the Turkish language, accompanied the aga, and were to serve as witnesses against him, in case he should make a false report.

This aga saw the truth of the king's assertion with his own eyes, and informed the Sultan of every particular. Achmet, fired with indignation, was going to strangle the grand vizier; but the favorite who protected him, and who thought he should have occasion for him, obtained his pardon, and supported him some time longer in the ministry.



The Russians were now openly espoused by the vizier, and secretly by Ali-Coumourgi, who had changed sides ; but the Sultan was so provoked, the infraction of the treaty was so manifest, and the janissaries, who often make the ministers, the favorites, and even the Sultans tremble, demanded war with such clamor, that no one in the seraglio durst offer a more moderate proposal.

The Grand Seignior immediately committed to the Seven Towers the Russian ambassadors, who were now as much accustomed to go to prison as to an audience. War was declared afresh against the Czar, the horsetails were displayed, and orders were given to all the pachas to assemble an army of two hundred thousand men. The Sultan himself quitted Constantinople, and went to fix his court at Adrianople, that he might be nearer to the seat of war.

In the meantime a solemn embassy, sent to the Grand Seignior by Augustus and the republic of Poland, was advancing on the road to Adrianople. At the head of the embassy was the Palatine of Mazovia, with a retinue of above three hundred persons.

Every one that composed the embassy was seized and imprisoned in one of the suburbs of the city. Never was the King of Sweden's party more sanguine than on this occasion ; and yet this great preparation was rendered useless, and all their hopes were again disappointed.

If we may believe a public minister, a man of sagacity and penetration, who resided at that time

at Constantinople, young Coumourgi had already other designs in his head than that of disputing a desert country with the Czar by a doubtful war. He had proposed to strip the Venetians of the Peloponnesus, now called the Morea, and to make himself master of Hungary.

He waited only for the execution of his great designs till he should have attained the post of grand vizier, from which he was still excluded on account of his youth. In this view it was more for his advantage to be the ally than the enemy of the Czar. It was neither his interest nor his inclination to keep the King of Sweden any longer, and still less to arm the Turkish empire in his favor. He not only desired to dismiss Charles, but he openly said that for the future no Christian ambassador ought to be suffered at Constantinople; that all these ministers in ordinary were but so many honorable spies, who corrupted or betrayed the viziers, and had too long influenced the intrigues of the seraglio; and that the Franks settled at Pera, and in the Straits of the Levant, were merchants, who needed only a consul, and not an ambassador. The grand vizier, who owed his post and his life to the favorite, and, what was more, stood in fear of him, complied with his scheme the more readily as he had sold himself to the Russians. and hoped by this means to be revenged on the King of Sweden, who had endeavored to ruin him. The mufti, a creature of Ali-Coumourgi, was also the slave to his will; he had advised the war with Russia when the favorite wished it; but the moment

this young man changed his opinion, he pronounced it to be unjust; thus was the army hardly assembled before they began to listen to proposals of accommodation. The vice-chancellor Schaffirof, and young Czeremetoff, hostages and plenipotentiaries of the Czar at the Porte, promised, after several negotiations, that the Czar should withdraw his troops from Poland. The grand vizier, who knew well that the Czar would never execute this treaty, made no scruple to sign it; and the Sultan, satisfied with having in appearance imposed laws on the Russians, remained still at Adrianople. Thus, in less than six months, was peace ratified with the Czar, war declared, and peace renewed again.

The principal article of all these treaties was to oblige the King of Sweden to depart. The Sultan, however, was not willing to endanger his own honor, and that of the Ottoman empire, by exposing the king to the risk of being taken by his enemies on the road. It was stipulated that he should depart, but on condition that the ambassadors of Poland and Muscovy should be responsible for the safety of his person. These ambassadors accordingly swore, in the name of their masters, that neither the Czar nor the King of Poland should molest him on his journey; and Charles was to engage, on his part, that he would not attempt to excite any commotions in Poland. The divan having thus settled the fate of Charles, Ismael, Seraskier of Bender, repaired to Varnitza, where the king was encamped, to acquaint him with the resolutions of the Porte,

persuading him with great address, that there was no longer time for delay, and that it was necessary he should depart.

Charles made no other answer than that the Grand Seignior had promised him an army, and not a guard, and that kings ought to keep their word.

In the meantime General Fleming, the minister and favorite of Augustus, maintained a secret correspondence with the Kam of Tartary and the Seraskier of Bender. La Mare, a French colonel in the service of Saxony, had made more than one journey from Bender to Dresden, and all these journeys were suspicious.

At this very time the King of Sweden caused a courier, whom Fleming had sent to the Tartar prince, to be arrested on the frontiers of Wallachia. The letters were brought to him, and deciphered; from whence it clearly appeared that a correspondence was carried on between the Tartars and the court of Dresden; but the letters were expressed in such ambiguous and general terms, that it was difficult to discover whether Augustus only intended to detach the Turks from the interest of Sweden, or whether he meant that the kam should deliver Charles to his Saxon officers as he conducted him back to Poland.

It seems hard to believe that a prince so generous as Augustus would, by seizing the person of the King of Sweden, endanger the lives of his ambassadors, and of three hundred Polish gentlemen, who were detained at Adrianople as pledges for Charles's safety.

But on the other hand, it is well known that Fleming, the absolute minister of Augustus, was a subtile man, and not very scrupulous. The outrages committed on the king elector by the King of Sweden might seem to render any revenge excusable; and it might be thought that if the court of Dresden could buy Charles from the Kam of Tartary, they would easily purchase the liberty of the Polish hostages at the Ottoman Porte.

All these reasons were discussed by the king, Mullern, his privy chancellor, and Grothusen, his favorite. They read the letters again and again; and as their unhappy situation made them more suspicious, they resolved to believe the worst.

A few days after, the king was confirmed in his suspicions by the precipitate departure of Count Sapieha, who had taken refuge with him, and now quitted him abruptly to go to Poland to throw himself into the arms of Augustus. In any other situation he would have regarded Sapieha only as a malcontent; but in his present delicate condition he did not hesitate to believe him a traitor. The repeated importunities with which they now pressed him to depart converted his suspicions into certainty. The obstinacy of his temper coinciding with these appearances confirmed him in the opinion that they intended to betray him and deliver him up to his enemies, though this plot has never been fully proved.

He might deceive himself in supposing that Augustus had made a bargain with the Tartars for his person; but he was much more deceived

in relying on the succors of the Ottoman court. Be that as it may, he resolved to gain time.

He told the Pacha of Bender that he could not depart without having money to pay his debts; for though his allowance had for a long time been restored to him, his liberality had always obliged him to borrow. The pacha asked him how much he wanted. The king replied, at a hazard, a thousand livres purses, amounting to fifteen hundred thousand livres of our money in the best coin.\* The Pacha wrote to the Porte; and the sultan, instead of a thousand purses which Charles had asked, sent twelve hundred, and wrote to the pacha requesting him to grant Charles a safe escort home by way of Poland.

During the time they were waiting for this letter from the Grand Seignior, the king wrote to the Porte complaining of the treachery of which he imagined the Kam of Tartary to be guilty; but all the passages were so well guarded, and the minister so opposed to him, that his letters never reached the Sultan; nay, the vizier stopped M. des Alleurs from coming to Adrianople, where the Porte then was, for fear that he, who was an agent of the King of Sweden, should endeavor to disconcert the plan he had formed for obliging him to depart.

Charles, enraged at seeing himself thus hunted, as it were, from the Grand Seignior's dominions, determined not to quit them at all.

He might have desired to return through the

\* The livre (now disused) is a little more than a franc, so that this sum is equal to about £625,000 sterling.

territories of Germany, or to proceed by ship from the Black Sea, in order to reach Marseilles by the Mediterranean; but he rather chose to ask nothing, and to wait the result of circumstances.

When the twelve hundred purses arrived, Charles's treasurer, Grothusen, who had learned the Turkish language during his long stay in the country, went to wait upon the pacha without an interpreter. Being continually sanguine of the foolish hope that the Swedish party would at last be able to arm the Ottoman empire against the Czar, his intention was first to draw the money, and then form some new intrigue at the Porte.

Grothusen told the pacha that the king was not able to prepare his carriages without money. "But," said the pacha, "we shall settle all the expenses of your departure; your master has no occasion to be at any expense while he continues under my protection."

Grothusen replied that there was so much difference between the carriages of the Turks and those of the Franks, that they were obliged to have recourse to the artificers of Sweden and Poland resident at Varnitza.

He assured him that his master was disposed to depart, and that this money would facilitate and hasten his departure. The pacha, too credulous, gave the twelve hundred purses; and attended the king a few days after, in a most respectful manner, to receive his orders for his departure.

His surprise was inconceivable, when the king told him he was not yet ready to go, and that he

wanted a thousand purses more. The pacha, confounded at this answer, was some time before he could speak. He then retired to a window, where he was observed to shed some tears. At last, addressing himself to the king, he said, "I shall lose my head for having obliged your majesty: I have given you the twelve hundred purses against the express orders of my sovereign." He then withdrew, oppressed with grief.

As he was going, the king stopped him, and said that he would excuse him to the Sultan. "Ah!" replied the Turk, as he departed, "my master knows not how to excuse faults, he knows only to punish them."

Ismael Pacha carried this piece of news to the kam, who had received the same orders as the pacha, not to allow the twelve hundred purses to be given to the king before his departure, and yet had consented to the delivery of the money. He was therefore as apprehensive as the pacha of the Grand Seignior's indignation. They both wrote to the Porte to justify themselves; protesting that they had given the twelve hundred purses upon the solemn promises of the king's minister that he would depart without delay; and beseeching his highness not to impute the king's refusal to their disobedience.

Charles, still persisting in the idea that the kam and pacha wanted to deliver him up to his enemies, ordered M. Funk, at that time his envoy at the Ottoman court, to lay his complaint against them before the Sultan, and to ask a thousand purses



more. His own great generosity, and the little regard he had for money, hindered him from seeing the meanness of this proposal. He did it merely to have a refusal, and in order to have a fresh pretext for not departing. But it is being reduced to strange extremities to stand in need of such artifices. Savari, his interpreter, an artful and enterprising man, carried his letter to Adrianople in spite of the strictness which the grand vizier had used to guard the passes.

Funk was obliged to make this dangerous demand. All the answer he received was to be thrown into prison. The Sultan, enraged, convoked an extraordinary divan, and, what very seldom happens, spoke himself on the occasion, concluding his address with the following question:

“I ask, then, whether it would be a violation of the laws of hospitality to send back this prince; and whether foreign powers ought to accuse me of violence and injustice, in case I should be obliged to compel him to depart by force?”

The whole divan answered that the Grand Seignior acted with justice. The mufti declared that hospitality from Mussulmen towards infidels was not commanded, and much less towards the ungrateful. He then gave his fetfa, which is a kind of mandate generally accompanying the important orders of the Grand Seignior. These fetfas are revered as oracles, though the very persons by whom they are given are as much slaves to the Sultan as any others.

The order and the fetfa were carried to Bender by the Boyouk Imraour, grand master of the horse, and a Chiaou Pacha, first usher. The Pacha of Bender received the order at the house of the Kam of Tartary, from whence he immediately repaired to Varnitza to ask the king whether he would depart as a friend, or reduce him to the necessity of putting the orders of the Sultan in execution.

Charles thus menaced was not master of his passion. "Obey your master if you dare," said he, "and leave my presence." The pacha, fired with indignation, returned at full gallop, contrary to the usual custom of the Turks; and chancing to meet Fabricius in his way, he cried out to him, without checking his horse, "The king will not hear reason; you will see strange things presently." The same day he discontinued the supply of the king's provisions, and removed his guard of janissaries. He caused intimation to be given to all the Poles and Cossacks at Varnitza that if they wished to have any provisions, they must quit the camp of the King of Sweden, and repair to Bender, and put themselves under the protection of the Porte. They all obeyed, and left the king without any other attendants than the officers of his household, and three hundred Swedish soldiers, to make head against twenty thousand Tartars and six thousand Turks.

There was now no provision in the camp either for the men or their horses. The king ordered twenty of the fine Arabian horses which had been sent him by the Grand Seignior to be shot without

the camp, saying, "I will have none of their provisions nor their horses." This was an excellent treat to the Tartars, who, as is well known, think horse-flesh delicious food. In the meantime, the Turks and Tartars invested the king's little camp on every side.

The king, without the least *di composure*, made a regular intrenchment with his three hundred Swedes, in which work he himself assisted; his chancellor, his treasurer, his secretaries, his valets-de-chambre, and all his domestics, giving likewise their assistance. Some barricaded the windows, and others fastened beams behind the doors in the form of buttresses.

As soon as the house was sufficiently barricaded, and the king had gone round his pretended fortifications, he sat down to chess with his favorite Grothusen with as much tranquillity as if everything was in the greatest security. Happily M. Fabricius, the envoy of Holstein, did not lodge at Varnitza, but at a small village between Varnitza and Bender, where Mr. Jeffreys, the English envoy to the King of Sweden, likewise resided. These two ministers, seeing the storm ready to burst, took on themselves the office of mediators between the Turks and the king. The Kam, and especially the Pacha of Bender, who had no mind to offer violence to the Swedish monarch, received with eagerness the offers of these two ministers. They had two conferences at Bender, in which they were assisted by the usher of the seraglio and the grand master of the horse, who had brought the Sultan's order and the mufti's fetfa.

M. Fabricius \* declared to them that his Swedish majesty had many cogent reasons to believe that they meant to deliver him up to his enemies in Poland. The kam, the pacha, and all the rest, swore by their heads, and called God to witness, that they detested so horrible a perfidy, and that they would shed the last drop of their blood rather than suffer such disrespect to be shown to the king in Poland; adding that they had in their hands the Russian and Polish ambassadors, who would answer with their lives for the least affront that should be offered to the King of Sweden. In fine, they complained bitterly that the king should conceive such injurious suspicions against people who had received him so politely, and treated him with so much humanity. Though oaths are frequently the language of perfidy, Fabricius suffered himself to be persuaded by the Turks: he thought he could discern in their protestations that air of truth which falsehood can at best but imitate imperfectly. He knew perfectly well there had been a secret correspondence between the Kam of Tartary and King Augustus; but he was at last persuaded that the only end of the negotiation was to oblige Charles XII. to quit the dominions of the Grand Seignior. Whether Fabricius deceived himself or not, he assured them that he would represent to the king the injustice of his suspicions. "But," he added the question, "do you intend to compel him to depart?" "Yes," said the pacha, "such

\* The whole of this account is related by Fabricius in his Letters.

is the order of our master." He then entreated them to consider seriously whether that order implied that they should shed the blood of a crowned head. "Yes," replied the kam in a passion, "if that crowned head disobeys the Grand Seignior in his dominions."

In the meantime everything being ready for the assault, the death of Charles XII. seemed inevitable; but as the order of the Sultan did not expressly say they were to kill him in case of resistance, the pacha prevailed on the kam to let him despatch an express to Adrianople, where the Grand Seignior then resided, to receive his last orders.

Mr. Jeffreys and M. Fabricius, having procured this short respite, hastened to acquaint the king with it; they arrived with all the eagerness of people who bring good news, but were received very coldly. He called them officious mediators, and still persisted in his opinion that the order of the Sultan and the fetfa of the mufti were both forged, inasmuch as they had sent to the Porte for fresh orders.

The English minister retired, firmly resolved to interfere no more in the affairs of so inflexible a man. M. Fabricius, beloved by the king, and more accustomed to his humor than the English minister, remained with him, to conjure him not to hazard so precious a life on such an unnecessary occasion.

The king for answer showed him his fortifications; and begged he would employ his mediation

only to procure him some provisions. The Turks were easily prevailed upon to allow provisions to be conveyed to the king's camp until the return of the courier from Adrianople. The kam himself had strictly enjoined his Tartars, who were eager for pillage, not to make any attempt against the Swedes till the arrival of fresh orders; so that Charles went sometimes out of his camp with forty horse, and rode through the midst of the Tartars, who with great respect left him a free passage: he would even run up in front of their lines, which they opened rather than resist him.

At last the order of the Grand Seignior came to put to the sword all the Swedes who should make the least resistance, and not even to spare the life of the king. The pacha had the civility to show the order to M. Fabricius, that he might make his last effort to overcome the obstinacy of Charles. Fabricius went immediately to acquaint him with these sad tidings. "Have you seen the order you speak of?" said the king. "Yes," replied Fabricius. "Well, then, go tell them in my name that this second order is another forgery, and that I will not depart." Fabricius threw himself at his feet, fell into a passion, and reproached him with his obstinacy; but all to no purpose. "Return to your Turks," said the king to him, smiling; "if they attack me I shall know how to defend myself."

The king's chaplains likewise threw themselves on their knees before him, conjuring him not to expose to certain death the unhappy remains of Pultowa, and especially his own sacred person;

assuring him that resistance in such a case was altogether unjustifiable; and that it was a direct violation of all the laws of hospitality, to resolve to continue against their will with strangers who had so long and so generously supported him. The king, though he had not been angry with Fabricius, fell into a passion with his priests, and told them that he had taken them to pray for him, and not to give him advice.

The Generals Hord and Dardoff, whose sentiments had always been against hazarding a battle which could not fail of proving unsuccessful, showed the king their breasts covered with wounds which they had received in his service, and assured him that they were ready to lay down their lives for him; but begged that it might be, at least, upon a more necessary occasion. "I know, by your wounds and my own," said Charles, "that we have fought valiantly together. You have done your duty hitherto; do it likewise to-day." Nothing now remained but to obey. Every one was ashamed not to court death with his king. Charles, being now prepared for the assault, flattered himself in secret that he should have the honor of sustaining with three hundred Swedes the efforts of a whole army. He assigned to every man his post; his chancellor Mullern, and the secretary Empreus and his clerks, were to defend the chancery-house; Baron Fief, at the head of the officers of the kitchen, was stationed at another post; the grooms of the stable and the cooks had another place to guard; for with him even was a soldier; he

then rode from the entrenchments to his house, promising rewards to every one, creating officers, and assuring them that he would make captains of the very meanest of his servants who should fight with courage.

It was not long before they beheld the army of the Turks and Tartars advancing to attack this little entrenchment with ten pieces of cannon and two mortars. The horse-tails waved in the air; the clarions sounded; the cries of "Alla, Alla," were heard on every side. Baron Grothusen remarked that the Turks did not mix in their cries any injurious reflections against the king, but that they only called him "Demirbash" (head of iron). He therefore instantly resolved to go out of the camp alone and unarmed; and accordingly advanced to the lines of the janissaries, most of whom had received money from him. "What, my friends," said he to them in their own language, "are you come to massacre three hundred Swedes who are defenceless? You, brave janissaries, who have pardoned fifty thousand Russians upon their crying *amman* (pardon), have you forgot the many favors you have received from us: and would you assassinate this great King of Sweden, whom you love, and whose liberality you have so often experienced? My friends, he desires but three days, and the orders of the Sultan are not so strict as you are taught to believe."

These words produced an effect which Grothusen himself could not have expected. The janissaries swore by their beards that they would not attack



the king, but would give him the three days he demanded. In vain the signal for assault was given; the janissaries, so far from obeying, threatened to fall upon their commander if the three days were not granted to the King of Sweden. They then went to the Pacha of Bender's tent, crying out that the Sultan's orders were forged.

To this unexpected sedition the pacha had nothing to oppose but patience. He affected a satisfaction at the generous resolution of the janissaries, and ordered them to return to Bender. The Kam of Tartary, being an impetuous man, would have made the assault immediately with his own troops; but the pacha, who was not willing that the Tartars should have all the honor of taking the king, while he himself, perhaps, might be punished for the disobedience of the janissaries, persuaded the kam to wait till the next day.

The pacha, on his return to Bender, assembled all the officers of the janissaries, and the oldest soldiers, to whom he read, and also showed, the positive order of the Sultan, together with the mufti's fetfa. Sixty of the oldest, with venerable white beards, who had received a thousand presents from the hands of the King of Sweden, proposed to go to him in person, to entreat him to put himself into their hands, and to permit them to serve him as guards.

The pacha agreed to this, as there was no expedient he would not have adopted, rather than be reduced to the necessity of putting Charles to death. These sixty old veterans accordingly re-

paired the next morning to Varnitza, having nothing in their hands but long white rods, the only arms of the janissaries when they are not at war; for the Turks regard as a barbarous custom the Christian manner of wearing swords in time of peace, and going armed into the houses of their friends as well as into churches.

They addressed themselves to Baron Grothusen and Chancellor Mullern: they told them that they came to serve as faithful guards to the king; and that if he pleased they would conduct him to Adrianople, where he might himself speak to the Grand Seignior. At the time they were making this proposal, the king was reading letters which were brought from Constantinople, and which Fabricius, who could no longer attend him in person, had sent him secretly by a janissary. They were from Count Poniatowsky, who could neither serve him at Bender nor Adrianople, being detained at Constantinople by order of the Porte, from the time of his making the imprudent demand of the thousand purses. He informed the king, "that the orders of the Sultran to seize or massacre his royal person in case of resistance, were but too true; that indeed the Sultan was deceived by his ministers; but that the more he was imposed upon, he would for that very reason be the more faithfully obeyed; that he must submit to the time, and yield to the necessity; that he took the liberty to advise him to try every expedient with the ministers by way of negotiations; not to be inflexible in a matter which required the gentlest management; and to expect

from time and good policy a remedy for that evil, which, by violent measures, would only be rendered incurable."

But neither the proposals of the old janissaries, nor the letters of Poniatowsky, could give the king even an idea that he could yield without incurring dishonor. He chose rather to perish by the hands of the Turks, than to be in any respect their prisoner; he therefore dismissed the janissaries without deigning to see them, and sent them word, that if they did not immediately depart, he would cut off their beards; which in the eastern countries is esteemed the most outrageous of all affronts.

The old men, filled with the keenest indignation, returned home, crying out as they went, "Ah, this head of iron! since he will perish, let him perish." They gave the pacha an account of their mission, and informed their comrades at Bender of the strange reception they had met with. Every one then swore to obey the pacha's orders without delay, and were as impatient to begin the assault as they had been backward the day before.

The word of command was immediately given; the Turks marched up to the intrenchments; the Tartars were already waiting for them, and the cannon began to play. The janissaries on the one side, and the Tartars on the other, in an instant forced the little camp. Hardly twenty Swedes drew their swords: the whole three hundred were surrounded and made prisoners without resistance. The king was then on horseback, between his house and his camp, with the Generals Hord, Dardoff, and

Sparre ; and seeing that all his soldiers were taken prisoners before his eyes, he said with great composure to these three officers, " Come, let us go and defend the house. We will fight," he added with a smile, "*pro aris et focis.*"

Accordingly he galloped with them up to the house, in which he had placed about forty domestics as sentinels, and which he had fortified in the best manner possible.

The generals, accustomed as they were to the dauntless intrepidity of their master, were surprised to see him resolve in cold blood, and even with an air of pleasantry, to defend himself against ten pieces of cannon and a whole army. They followed him with some guards and domestics, making in all about twenty persons.

When they came to the door, they found it besieged by the janissaries ; two hundred Turks and Tartars had already entered by a window, and had made themselves masters of all the apartments except a large hall, into which the king's domestics had retired. This hall was happily near the door at which the king designed to enter with his little troop of twenty persons ; he threw himself off his horse with pistol and sword in hand, and his followers did the same.

The janissaries fell upon him on all sides. They were animated by the promise which the pacha had made of eight ducats of gold to every one who should only touch his clothes, in case they could not take him. Charles at bay wounded and killed whoever approached his person. A janissary whom he

had wounded pushed his carbine to his face, and had not his arm been pushed aside by the motion of the crowd, which moved backwards and forwards like a wave, the king had certainly been shot. The ball grazed his nose, and carried away the tip of his ear. It then broke the arm of General Hord, whose destiny it was to be always wounded by the side of his master.

The king plunged his sword in the janissary's breast; at the same time his domestics, who were shut up in the great hall, opened the door; the king entered like an arrow, followed by his little troop; they instantly shut the door, and barricaded it with whatever they could find. In this manner Charles was shut up in a hall with all his attendants, consisting of about sixty men, officers, guards, secretaries, valets-de-chambre, and domestics of every kind.

The janissaries and Tartars pillaged the rest of the house, and filled the apartments. "Come," said the king, "let us go and drive these barbarians out of my house;" and putting himself at the head of his men, he with his own hands opened the door of the hall that led to his bed-chamber, rushed into the room, and fired upon those who were plundering.

The Turks, loaded with spoil, and terrified at the sudden appearance of the king, whom they had been accustomed to respect, threw down their arms, leaped out of the window, or retired to the cellars. The king, taking advantage of their confusion, and his own men being animated with success, they

pursued the Turks from chamber to chamber, killing or wounding those who had not made their escape; and in a quarter of an hour cleared the house of their enemies.

In the heat of the fight the king perceived two janissaries who had hid themselves under his bed. One of these he killed with his sword; the other having asked for mercy, by crying "Amman,"—"I give thee thy life," said the king, "on condition that you go and give to the pacha a faithful account of what you have seen." The Turk readily promised to do this, and was allowed to leap out of the window like the rest.

The Swedes, being at last masters of the house, again shut and barricaded the windows. They were not in want of arms, a ground room full of muskets and powder having escaped the tumultuary search of the janissaries. These they employed to good service; they fired through the windows almost close upon the Turks, of whom in less than half an hour, they killed two hundred.

The cannon still played upon the house; yet, as the stones were very soft, the balls only made some indentations, without demolishing anything.

The Kam of Tartary and the Pacha were desirous of taking the king alive, and being ashamed to lose so many men, and to employ a whole army against sixty persons, thought it advisable to set fire to the house, in order to oblige the king to surrender. They caused some arrows, twisted about with lighted matches, to be shot upon the roof, and against the doors and windows, and the house was

in flames in a moment. The roof, all on fire, was ready to tumble upon the Swedes. The king with great calmness gave orders to extinguish the fire. Finding a little barrel of liquor, he took it up himself, and assisted by two Swedes, threw it upon the place where the fire was most violent. It happened that the barrel was filled with brandy; but the hurry inseparable from such a scene of confusion hindered them from thinking of it in time. The fire now raged with double fury; the king's apartment was entirely consumed; the great hall, where the Swedes were, was filled with a terrible smoke, mixed with sheets of flame, which entered in at the doors of the neighboring apartments; one half of the roof had sunk within the house, and the other fell on the outside, crackling amidst the flames.

In this extremity, a guard called Walberg ventured to cry out that it was necessary to surrender.

“*There* is a strange man,” said the king, “to imagine that it is not more glorious to be burnt than taken prisoner!” Another sentinel, named Rosen, had the presence of mind to observe that the chancery-house, which was but fifty paces distant, had a stone roof, and was proof against fire; that they ought to sally forth, take possession of that house, and then defend themselves. “*There* is a true Swede for you,” cried the king, embracing the sentinel, and making him a colonel upon the spot. “Come on, my friends,” said he; “take as much powder and ball with you as you can, and let us take possession of the chancery sword in hand.”

The Turks, who all the while surrounded the house, saw with admiration, mixed with terror, the Swedes' determination even in the midst of flames; but their astonishment was still greater when they saw the door of the house open, and the king and his followers rushing out upon them like so many madmen. Charles and his principal officers were armed with swords and pistols; every man fired two pistols at once, as soon as the doors were opened; and, in the twinkling of an eye, throwing away their pistols and drawing their swords, they made the Turks recoil above fifty paces. But, in a moment after, the little troop was surrounded. The king, who was booted, according to his usual custom, entangled himself with his spurs and fell, one-and-twenty janissaries at once sprang upon him: he immediately threw up his sword into the air, to save himself the mortification of surrendering it; the Turks carried him to the quarters of the pacha, some taking hold of his legs, and others of his arms, in the same manner as sick persons are carried to prevent their being hurt.

The moment the king found himself taken prisoner, the violence of his temper, and the fury of his long and desperate fight, gave place at once to a mild and gentle behavior. He dropped not a word of impatience, nor was an angry look to be seen in his face. He regarded the janissaries with a smiling countenance; and they carried him off crying "Alla," with an indignation mixed at the same time with respect. His officers were taken at the same time and stripped by the Turks and



**Tartars.** It was on the 12th of February, 1713, that this strange event happened, which was followed with very singular consequences.\*

\* M. Norberg, who was not present at this event, has only copied Voltaire's account of it. But he has mangled and suppressed several interesting circumstances, and has not been able to justify Charles's foolhardiness.

## BOOK VII.

### PRISON LIFE IN TURKEY, AND RETURN TO SWEDEN.

The Turks convey Charles as a prisoner to Adrianople—Abdication of King Stanislaus of Poland, who also repairs to Turkey—M. de Villelongue's successful Stratagem on Charles's behalf—Revolution in the Seraglio—Charles conveyed to Demotica—Takes to his bed for ten months—Battle of Stade—Altena burnt by the Swedes—Surrender of the Swedes at Tonningen—Charles sets out on his return to Sweden—His Strange manner of travelling—His Arrival at Stralsund—State of Europe—Melancholy State of Sweden—Successes of Peter the Great—His Triumphant Entry into Petersburg.

THE Pacha of Bender awaited the arrival of Charles with great solemnity in his tent, attended by his interpreter Marco. He received him with the most profound respect, and begged him to repose himself on a sofa; but the king, regardless of the Turk's civilities, continued standing.

"Blessed be the Almighty," said the Pacha, "that your Majesty is alive. My despair is bitter at having been obliged by your Majesty to exe-

cute the orders of his Highness." The king, only vexed that his three hundred soldiers suffered themselves to be taken in their entrenchments, replied, "Ah! had my soldiers defended themselves as they ought, you would not have forced our camp in ten days." "Alas," cried the Turk, "that so much courage should be so ill employed!" He ordered the king to be conducted back to Bender on a horse richly caparisoned. His Swedes were all either killed or taken prisoners; Charles's equipage, furniture, papers, and most necessary utensils, were either plundered or burnt; and Swedish officers were to be seen on the public roads, almost naked and chained two and two, following on foot the Tartars or janissaries. The chancellor and the general officers had no other destiny; they were made the slaves of the soldiers to whose share they had fallen.

Ismael Pacha having conducted Charles to his seraglio at Bender, gave up to him his own apartment, and ordered him to be served like a king, but not without taking the precaution to place janissaries as sentinels at the door. A bed was also prepared for him; but he threw himself down upon a sofa, booted as he was, and fell fast asleep. An officer in waiting, who stood near him, covered his head with his cap; but the king on awaking from his first sleep threw it off, and the Turk beheld with astonishment a sovereign sleeping in his boots and bareheaded. The next morning Ismael introduced Fabricius into the king's chamber. Fabricius found his majesty with his clothes

torn, his boots, his hands, and his whole body covered with blood and powder, and his eyebrows burnt, yet maintaining a serene countenance even in this condition. He threw himself upon his knees before him, without being able to utter a word; but soon recovering from his surprise by the free and easy manner in which the king addressed him, he resumed his usual familiarity, and they began to talk of the battle of Bender with much pleasantry. "They say," said Fabricius, "that your majesty killed twenty janissaries with your own hand." "Well, well," replied the king, "a story always gains one half by report." In the midst of this conversation the pacha presented to the king his favorite Grothusen and Colonel Ribbins, whom he had generously redeemed at his own expense. Fabricius undertook to ransom the other prisoners.

Jeffreys, the envoy of England, engaged with him to procure the money to defray the expense. A Frenchman, who had come to Bender out of curiosity, and who wrote a short account of these transactions, gave all that he had. These strangers, assisted by the interest, and even by the money, of the pacha, redeemed not only the officers, but also their clothes, from the hands of the Turks and Tartars.

Next day Charles was conducted as a prisoner, in a chariot covered with scarlet, towards Adrianople. His treasurer Grothusen was with him; Chancellor Mullern and several officers followed in another carriage; several were on horseback; and when they cast their eyes on the chariot in which the

king was, they could not refrain from tears. While the pacha was at the head of the escort, Fabricius remarked to him that it was shameful the king should want a sword, and begged he would give him one. "God forbid!" said the pacha, "he would cut off our beards if he had one." Afterwards, however, he yielded.

As they were thus conducting Charles disarmed and a prisoner, who but a few years before had given law to so many states, and had seen himself the arbiter of the north and the terror of Europe, there appeared in the same place another example of the frailty of human grandeur. King Stanislaus had been seized in the Turkish dominions, and they were now carrying him to Bender at the very time that they were carrying Charles from it.

Stanislaus being no longer supported by the hand which had made him king, and finding himself without money, and consequently without interest in Poland, had retired at first into Pomerania; and not being able to preserve his own kingdom, he had done everything in his power to defend the dominions of his benefactor. He had even gone to Sweden, in order to hasten the reinforcements that were so much wanting in Livonia and Pomerania; in short, he had done everything that could be expected from the friend of Charles XII. At this time the first King of Prussia,\* a very prudent

\* This was Frederick I., son of "the Great Elector," as he was called, of Brandenburg. Until this time Prussia was only a Duchy, but Frederick, with the consent of the Emperor of Germany, ushered in the great Prussian monarchy, by placing the crown on his own head at Königsberg, then the capital, January 18, 1701.

prince, being justly apprehensive of the too near neighborhood of the Muscovites, thought of entering into a league with Augustus and the republic of Poland, in order to send back the Russians to their own country, and of engaging Charles XII. himself in this project. Three great events were to be accomplished by this plan; the peace of the north, the return of Charles to his own dominions, and the establishment of a strong barrier against the Russians, who had already become formidable to Europe. The preliminary article of this treaty, upon which the public tranquillity depended, was the abdication of Stanislaus; who not only accepted the proposal, but even charged himself with being the negotiator of a peace which deprived him of his crown. Necessity, the public welfare, the glory of the sacrifice, and the interest of Charles, to whom he owed everything, and whom he loved, decided him. He wrote to Bender; explained to the King of Sweden the situation of his affairs, his misfortunes, and their remedy; and conjured him not to oppose an abdication which had become necessary from the course of events, and honorable from its motives; he also entreated him not to sacrifice the interests of Sweden to those of an unhappy friend, who sacrificed himself without repining to the public good. Charles received these letters at Varnitza, and said to the courier in a passion, in presence of several witnesses, "If my friend will not be a king, I shall be able to make one of another person."

Stanislaus was obstinately bent on the sacrifice

which Charles opposed. The times seemed as if they were destined by providence to produce strange sentiments, and still more extraordinary actions. Stanislaus resolved to go himself and prevail on Charles, though he ran a greater risk in abdicating the throne than ever he had done in obtaining it. One evening, about six o'clock, he stole from the Swedish army, which he commanded in Pomerania, and set out, accompanied by Baron Sparr (who had since been an ambassador in England and France), and another colonel. He assumed the name of a Frenchman called Haran, then a major in the Swedish army, and who had lately died commander of Dantzic. He passed close by the whole army of the enemy; was sometimes stopped, and as often released by virtue of a passport which he had in the name of Haran; and at last, after many perils and dangers, arrived on the frontiers of Turkey.

When he reached Moldavia, he sent back Baron Sparr to his army, and entered Jassy, the capital, thinking himself safe in a country where the King of Sweden had been treated so respectfully: he was far from suspecting what was then passing.

He was asked who he was; to which he answered that he was a major of a regiment in the service of Charles XII. At the very mention of the name he was seized, and carried before the Hospodar of Moldavia, who, having already learned from the gazettes that Stanislaus had privately withdrawn from his army, conceived some suspicions of the truth. The king's countenance, which had been

described to him, was very easily distinguished by its fullness, as well as its agreeable expression, and an air of sweetness which he possessed to an uncommon degree.

The hospodar interrogated him, put to him a great many captious questions, and at last asked him what commission he held in the Swedish army. Stanislaus and the hospodar carried on their conversation in Latin. "*Major sum*" said Stanislaus. "*Imo Maximus es,*" replied the Moldavian; and immediately presented him with a chair of state. He treated him as a king, but yet like a king who was a prisoner, and he placed a strict guard about a Greek convent, in which he was obliged to remain till they received the Sultan's orders. The orders were to conduct him to Bender, from which place Charles XII. had been just removed.

The news of this event was brought to the pacha at the time he was accompanying the King of Sweden's carriage. The pacha immediately made it known to Fabricius, who, approaching Charles's chariot, told him he was not the only king that was a prisoner in the hands of the Turks, as Stanislaus was but a few miles off, under a guard of soldiers. "Run to him, my dear Fabricius," said Charles, without being disconcerted at the accident; "tell him never to make peace with Augustus, and assure him that in a little time our affairs will change." So inflexible was Charles in his own opinions that, abandoned as he was in Poland, attacked in his own dominions, a captive in a Turkish litter, and led a prisoner without knowing



whither they were carrying him, he still trusted to fortune, and still expected to have a hundred thousand men from the Ottoman Porte. Fabricius hastened to execute his commission, attended by a janissary, having obtained permission from the pacha. At a few miles' distance he met the body of soldiers that conducted Stanislaus, and addressing himself to a cavalier in a French costume who rode in the midst of them, but was indifferently mounted, asked him in the German tongue where the King of Poland was. The person to whom he spoke was Stanislaus himself, whom he did not recollect under this disguise. "What!" said the king, "do you no longer remember me?" Fabricius then represented to him the wretched state in which the King of Sweden was, and his unalterable out useless obstinacy in his designs.

As Stanislaus approached Bender, the pacha, who was upon his return, after having accompanied Charles several miles, sent the King of Poland an Arabian horse, with a magnificent set of harness.

He was received at Bender amidst a discharge of artillery; and, excepting his liberty, of which he was at first deprived, he had no cause to complain of the treatment he met with.\* In the mean-

\* The good chaplain Norberg alleges that it is a contradiction to say that King Stanislaus was at once detained a prisoner, and treated as a king at Bender. How! had not this poor man discernment enough to perceive that it is possible for a man to be a prisoner, and yet loaded with honors at the same time?

time Charles was conducted to Adrianople.\* That town was already apprised of the account of his late battle. The Turks condemned and admired him at the same time; but the divan, exasperated, already threatened to confine him in one of the islands of the Archipelago.

Stanislaus, King of Poland, who did me the honor to inform me of the greatest part of these particulars, assured me also that it was proposed in the divan to confine him likewise in one of the islands of Greece; but a few months after, the Grand Seignior, being mollified, permitted him to depart.

M. des Alleurs, who could have taken his part, and could have prevented them from offering such an affront to any Christian king, was at Constantinople; as was also M. Poniatowsky, whose fertile and enterprising genius they had ever dreaded. The greatest part of the Swedes at Adrianople were in prison; and the Sultan's throne seemed to be inaccessible on all sides to the complaints of the King of Sweden.

The Marquis de Fierville, who had resided with Charles at Bender as a private agent of France, was at that time at Adrianople. This nobleman formed a rather daring design of rendering Charles a service, at a time when he was abandoned and oppressed by every one. He was happily seconded by a French gentleman, of an ancient house in

\* Adrianople (called by the Turks Edreneh) is in the province of Rumelia, 137 miles west of Constantinople, and next to it, the most important city in Turkey.

Champagne, called Villelongue, a man of intrepidity, who not having at that time a fortune equal to his courage, and being besides dazzled with the reputation of the King of Sweden, had come to Turkey with a view of entering into his service.

M. de Fierville, with the assistance of this young man, wrote a memorial in the name of the King of Sweden, in which he made that monarch demand satisfaction of the Sultan for the insult offered in his person to all crowned heads, and for the treachery, real or supposed, of the Kam and the Pacha of Bender.

In this memorial he accused the vizier and other ministers of having been corrupted by the Russians, of imposing upon the Grand Seignior, of having intercepted the king's letters to his highness, and of having by their artifices extorted an order from the Sultan contrary to the hospitality of Mussulmen, in violation of the law of nations, and, in a manner unworthy of a great emperor, to attack with twenty thousand men a king who had none but his own domestics to defend him, and who relied upon the sacred word of the Sultan.

When this memorial was drawn up, it was necessary to have it translated into the Turkish language, and written in a particular hand, upon a particular paper made on purpose, which it is necessary to make use of for every letter which is presented to the Sultan.

They applied to several French interpreters in the town; but the affairs of the King of Sweden

were so desperate, and the vizier spoke so openly against him, that not a single interpreter dared even translate it. At last they found a stranger whose hand was not known at the Porte, who, in consideration of a handsome reward, and the assurance of profound secrecy, translated the memorial into the Turkish language, and wrote it upon the proper sort of paper. Baron d'Advirson, a Swedish officer, counterfeited the king's signature. Fierville, who had the royal signet, set it to the writing; and they sealed the whole with the arms of Sweden. Villelongue charged himself with the delivery of this packet into the hands of the Grand Seignior as he went to the mosque, according to his usual custom. The same method had been frequently employed to present memorials to the Sultan against his ministers; but that very circumstance rendered the success of this enterprise the more difficult, and the danger still greater.

The vizier, who foresaw that the Swedes would demand justice of the Sultan, and being acquainted with the unhappy fate of his predecessors, had given peremptory orders to allow no one to approach the Grand Seignior's person, but to seize all persons who should be about the mosque with petitions in their hands.

Villelongue knew of this order, and was not ignorant that he ran the risk of losing his head. He laid aside his French dress, and put on a Grecian habit; and, concealing the letter in his bosom, repaired in good time to the neighborhood of the mosque to which the Grand Seignior re-

sorted. He counterfeited the madman, and, dancing between two files of janissaries through which the Sultan was to pass, he purposely let drop some pieces of money from his pockets, as if by chance, in order to amuse the guards.

When the Sultan approached, the guards endeavored to remove Villelongue; but he fell on his knees and struggled with the janissaries. At last, his cap fell off, and he was discovered by his long hair to be a Frenchman. He received several blows, and was very roughly handled. The Grand Seignior, who was near, heard the scuffle, and demanded the cause of it. Villelongue cried out with all his force, "*Amman! Amman! mercy!*" pulling the letter out of his bosom. The Sultan ordered the guards to let him approach. Villelongue instantly ran to him, embraced his stirrup, and presented the memorial, saying, "*Sued crall dan; it is the King of Sweden who gives you this.*" The Sultan put the letter in his bosom, and proceeded to the mosque. In the meanwhile they secured Villelongue, and imprisoned him in one of the exterior apartments of the seraglio.

The Sultan having read the letter, upon his leaving the mosque resolved to interrogate the prisoner himself. What I relate here will perhaps appear somewhat incredible; but yet nothing is here advanced but what is vouched by the letters of M. de Villelongue; and when so brave an officer asserts anything upon his honor, he merits some credit. He assured me, then, that the Sultan laid aside his imperial garb, and the particular turban

which he wears, and disguised himself like an officer of the janissaries, a thing which he frequently does. He brought along with him an old man of the island of Malta, who served as an interpreter. By means of this disguise Villelongue enjoyed an honor which no Christian ambassador had ever obtained; he had a private conference with the Turkish Sultan for a quarter of an hour. He did not fail to represent the wrongs which the King of Sweden had suffered, to accuse the ministers, and to demand satisfaction, with so much the more freedom as, in the circumstances, he was only supposed to be talking to his equal. He could easily discover, notwithstanding the darkness of the prison, that it was no other than the Grand Seignior himself; but this only served to give him the more spirit in the conversation. The pretended officer of the janissaries said to Villelongue, "Christian, assure thyself that the Sultan, my master, has the soul of an emperor; and that if your King of Sweden has reason on his side, he will do him justice." Villelongue was soon after set at liberty; and in a few weeks after, a sudden change was seen in the seraglio, which the Swedes attributed to this singular conference. The mufti was deposed; the Kam of Tartary was banished to Rhodes; and the Seraskier Pacha of Bender confined in one of the islands of the Archipelago.

The Ottoman Porte is so subject to the like revolutions, that it is difficult to decide whether the Sultan really meant by these sacrifices to appease the King of Sweden or not. Indeed,

from the subsequent treatment which he received, it does not appear that the Porte had any great inclination to oblige him.

The favorite Ali-Coumourgi was suspected of being the sole cause of all these changes, in order to serve his own particular views. It was said that *he* caused the Kam of Tartary and the Seraskier of Bender to be banished, under the pretense that they had given the king the twelve hundred purses contrary to the orders of the Grand Seignior. He likewise raised to the throne of Tartary the brother of the deposed kam, a young man of his own age, who had little regard for his brother, and upon whom the favorite depended greatly in prosecuting the wars he had meditated. With regard to the grand vizier Jussuff, he was not deposed till some weeks after, when Soliman Pacha obtained the title of first vizier.\*

In the meantime they conducted Charles XII. to the little castle of Demirtash, near Adrianople. An innumerable number of Turks assembled here to witness his arrival, and they carried him from

\* It becomes me here to mention the assurance given me by M. de Villelongue and several Swedes, that the letter presented to the Sultan in the king's name *was* the cause of all these great changes at the Porte ; but M. de Fierville, on his part, has assured me of the contrary. But, indeed, I have found the like contradictions in many memorials that have been submitted to my perusal. In such cases, it is the duty of an historian to state matters of fact ingenuously, without endeavoring to dive into motives ; and to confine himself to the relation of what he *does* know, without guessing at things beyond his knowledge.

his chariot to the castle on a sofa ; but Charles put a cushion upon his head, that he might not be seen by the crowd.

The Porte was several days before it would grant his request to reside at Demotica, a small town six leagues from Adrianople, and near the famous river Hebrus, now called Maritza. "Go," said Coumourgi to the grand vizier Soliman, "and tell the King of Sweden that he may stay at Demotica all his life ; I will be answerable that before the expiration of one year he will demand of his own accord to be gone ; but let your chief care be, not to furnish him with money."

Thus was the king conveyed to the little town of Demotica, where the Porte allowed him a supply, consisting of a considerable quantity of provisions for himself and his retinue ; but they would only grant him five-and-twenty crowns a day in money to buy pork and wine, two kinds of provisions which the Turks never furnish to others. The purse of five hundred crowns a day, which he had at Bender, was withdrawn.

Scarcely had he arrived at Demotica with his little court, when the grand vizier Soliman was deposed, and his place filled by Ibrahim Molla, a man of high spirit, of great courage, but of the coarsest manners. It is worth while to make known his history, that the reader may be acquainted with the characters of all those viceroys of the Ottoman empire upon whom the fortune of Charles so long depended.

He had been a common sailor till the accession



of the Sultan Achmet III. This emperor frequently disguised himself either in the habit of a private man, of a priest, or a dervise; and used to slip in the evening into the coffee-houses of Constantinople, and the public places to hear what was said of him, and to collect the sentiments of the people. One day he heard this Molla complaining that the Turkish ships never took any prizes, and swearing, that if he were a captain of a ship he would never enter the port of Constantinople without bringing some vessel of the infidels along with him. The Grand Seignior the next day ordered the command of a ship to be given to him, and that he should be sent upon a cruise. The new captain returned in a few days after with a Maltese bark, and a galley of Genoa. In about two years' time he was appointed captain-general of the navy, and at last grand vizier. As soon as he arrived at this post, he thought he could dispense with the favorite; and to render himself the more necessary, he projected a scheme for commencing a war against Russia. With this view he pitched a tent not far from the place where the King of Sweden resided.

He invited Charles to come and see him, with the new Kam of Tartary and the French ambassador. The king, who became more proud as he became more unfortunate, considered it a most daring affront for a subject to send him an invitation. He therefore ordered his chancellor Mullern to go in his place; and he himself, who carried everything to an extreme, lest the Turks should not pay him that respect which was due to his royal

person, or oblige him to compromise his dignity, took to his bed, and resolved not to quit it as long as he should stay at Demotica. Accordingly he remained ten months in his bed, pretending to be ill. Chancellor Mullern, Grothusen, and Colonel Dubens were the only persons who were admitted to his table. They had none of the conveniences with which the French are generally provided; all these they had lost at Bender; consequently their meals were far from being served with pomp or elegance. They waited on themselves; and during the whole time Chancellor Mullern acted as cook.

During the time that Charles was thus passing his time in bed, he was apprised of the desolation of all his provinces that were situated within the limits of Sweden.

General Steinbock, rendered illustrious by his driving the Danes out of Scania, and having conquered their choicest troops with a handful of peasants, still maintained for some time the reputation of the Swedish arms. He defended, as far as he was able, Pomerania, Bremen, and what the king still possessed in Germany; but could not hinder the combined armies of the Danes and Saxons from besieging Stade, a town of great strength and importance, situated on the banks of the Elbe, in the Duchy of Bremen. The town was bombarded and reduced to ashes, and the garrison obliged to surrender at discretion, before Steinbock was able to advance to their assistance.

This general, who had about twelve thousand men, of whom one half were cavalry, pursued the

enemy, who were twice as numerous; and at last overtook them in the Duchy of Mecklenburg, at a place called Gadebush, near a river which bears the same name. He arrived opposite to the Saxons and the Danes on the 20th of December, 1712. He was separated from them by a morass. The enemy had this morass in front, and a wood in their rear; they had also the advantage of number and situation, and their camp could not be gained without crossing the marsh under the fire of their artillery.

Steinbock passed at the head of his troops, arrived in order of battle, and began one of the most obstinate and bloody engagements which ever happened between these rival nations. After a sharp conflict for three hours, the Danes and Saxons were routed, and obliged to quit the field of battle.

It was in this battle that a son of Augustus by the Countess of Konigsmark, known by the name of Count Saxe, served his apprenticeship in the art of war. This is the same Count Saxe who had the honor afterwards to be elected Duke of Courland, and who wanted nothing but power to put himself in possession of the most incontestable right which any man can have to sovereignty, I mean the unanimous vote of the people. This is also the man who since then acquired a more solid glory by saving France at the battle of Fontenoy, by conquering Flanders, and meriting the reputation of the greatest general of our age. He commanded a regiment at Gadebush, and had a horse killed under

him. I have heard him say that the Swedes always kept their ranks; and that, even after the victory was decided, and the first lines of these brave troops had their enemies lying dead at their feet, there was not a single Swedish soldier who dared even to stoop to strip them, before prayers were read in the field of battle, so steady were they in the strict discipline to which their king had always accustomed them.

Steinbock, after this victory, remembering that the Danes had reduced Stade to ashes, proceeded to retaliate on Altena, which belongs to the King of Denmark. Altena stands below Hamburg, on the banks of the Elbe, which can convey ships of considerable burden into its harbor. The King of Denmark had favored this town with many privileges, with the design of establishing a flourishing commerce: the industry of its inhabitants, encouraged by the prudent measures of the king, had already added Altena to the number of rich and commercial cities. Hamburg had conceived a jealousy at this, and wished for nothing so much as its destruction. As soon as Steinbock was in sight of Altena, he sent a trumpet to acquaint the inhabitants, that they must retire with as many of their effects as they could carry off, and that he was going to raze their town to its foundation.

The magistrates came and threw themselves at his feet, and offered him a hundred thousand crowns for ransom. Steinbock demanded two hundred thousand. The inhabitants begged that they might be

at least permitted to send to Hamburg, where their correspondents resided, assuring him that next day they would send him that sum; but the Swedish general replied that they must give it instantly, or he would immediately set Altena in flames.

His troops were already in the suburbs with torches in their hands. A feeble wooden gate, and a ditch already filled up, were the only defense of the inhabitants of Altena. These unfortunate people were obliged to quit their houses with precipitation in the middle of the night. It was the 9th of January, 1713. The rigor of the season, then excessive, was augmented by a violent north wind, which served at once to spread the flames with more expedition through the town, and to render the miseries of the poor people who were exposed in the open fields the more intolerable. Men and women weeping and wailing, and bending under the weight of their furniture, fled to the neighboring hills, which were covered with snow. Many palsied old men were carried thither on the shoulders of the young. Several of the women fled with their babes in their arms, and perished together from the cold on the hills, throwing their last looks towards the flames which consumed their country. All the inhabitants had not time to quit the town before the Swedes set fire to it. The conflagration continued from midnight till ten in the morning. Almost all the houses being of wood, were entirely consumed; and the next day there was not the least appearance that there had been a town on that spot.

The aged, the sick, and women of tender constitutions, who had taken refuge in the snow while their houses were in flames, at last crawled to the gates of Hamburg, and besought the inhabitants to receive them within the walls, and to save their lives. But this was denied them, because there had been some contagious diseases in Altena, and the Hamburgers had not so great a regard for its inhabitants as to expose themselves to the danger of infection. Accordingly the greatest part of these miserable people perished under the walls of Hamburg, calling on heaven to witness the barbarity of the Swedes, and the not less inhuman treatment of the Hamburgers.

All Germany cried out against this violence. The ministers and generals of Poland and Denmark wrote to Count Steinbock, reproaching him with a cruelty so enormous, as, perpetrated without necessity, and remaining without excuse, provoked the vengeance of heaven and earth.

Steinbock replied, "that he should not have carried things to such extremities except to teach the enemies of the king, his master, not to make war in the future like barbarians, but to pay some regard to the laws of nations; that they had filled Pomerania with their cruelties, laid waste that beautiful province, and sold nearly 100,000 of the inhabitants to the Turks; and that the torches which had laid Altena in ashes were but returns for the red-hot bullets by which Stade had been consumed."

Such was the fury with which the Swedes and

their enemies carried on the war. If Charles had appeared in Pomerania at this time, it is reasonable to imagine he might have recovered his former good fortune. His armies, though removed at so great a distance from his person, were still animated by his spirit; but the absence of a chief is always prejudicial to his affairs, and prevents even victories from being turned to account. Steinbock lost piecemeal the great advantages he had gained by such signal actions as at another time would have proved decisive.

Victorious as he was, he could not prevent the combination of the Russians, Danes, and Saxons. His quarters were beat up. He lost some troops in several little skirmishes, and two thousand of his men were drowned in passing the Eider as they were going to their winter quarters in Holstein. All these losses, in a country surrounded on every side by powerful enemies, were utterly irreparable.

Holstein was at this time governed by its young duke, Frederick, aged twelve years, nephew of the King of Sweden, and son of that duke who had been killed at the battle of Clissau. The Bishop of Lubeck, his uncle, governed this unhappy country with the title of administrator, which its sovereigns had never possessed in tranquillity. In his anxiety for the states of his ward, he was desirous to preserve an apparent neutrality; but it was impossible to remain neutral between the army of the King of Sweden, whose heir the Duke of Holstein might become, and the armies of the allies, who were ready for invasion.

Count Steinbock, pressed by the enemy, and no longer able to preserve his small army, summoned the bishop-administrator to consent to its being received within the fortress of Tonningen. The bishop found himself reduced either entirely to sacrifice the king's army, or to draw upon Holstein the vengeance of Denmark.

He had recourse to artifice, that dangerous resource of the weak. He ordered Colonel Wolf, who commanded in Tonningen, to receive the Swedish troops in his fortress, but at the same time exacted of that officer that he should never mention that order, and Steinbock, on his side, took an oath to keep the negotiation secret.

It was necessary that Wolf should take upon himself to receive the army in his garrison as of his own authority, and that he should appear to disobey the orders of his sovereign. All this finesse turned out unfortunately for the duke, the country, and for Steinbock. The Czar, the King of Denmark, and the King of Prussia, blockaded Tonningen. The provisions which were to have come to this small army failed by a fatality which through this whole war ruined the affairs of Sweden.

At last Steinbock was forced to surrender himself prisoner to the King of Denmark, with his troops, on the 13th of March, 1713. Thus was this army irretrievably dissipated which had gained the two celebrated victories of Helsimbürg and Gadebush, under a general of whom were entertained the highest expectations; and the King of Denmark had the satisfaction to hold as his pris-



over the person who had thwarted all his designs, and reduced his town of Altena to ashes. Steinbock, when he quitted Tonningen, assured the King of Denmark that he had never entered that town but by stratagem, and that he had deceived the governor. The governor swore to the same thing, and preferred the dishonor of having been surprised to divulging the secret of his master.

The Duke of Holstein and the bishop-administrator protested that they had observed the neutrality: they implored the mediation of the King of Prussia and the Elector of Hanover. But all this finesse, not being supported by force, did not prevent the King of Denmark from besieging Wolf in Tonningen, a short time afterwards, with his own troops and those of the Czar. This commander surrendered as Steinbock had done, and at last confessed the secret of which the Danes had but too many suspicions.

This furnished the King of Denmark with a pretext for taking possession of the states of the Duke of Holstein, which have never yet been entirely restored to him. This same King of Denmark, who ravaged without scruple the duchy of Holstein, had yet the generosity to treat Steinbock with consideration, and gave an example of how kings are often more guided by their interests than their revenge. He left the incendiary of Altena free upon his parole at Copenhagen, and affected to heap favors upon him, till Steinbock, having attempted to escape, had the misfortune to be stopped, and to be convicted of having broken his parole. Then

he was strictly guarded, and reduced to ask pardon of the King of Denmark, who granted it to him.

Pomerania, being without defence, became a prey to the allies, and, excepting Søralsund, the Isle of Rugen, and some neighboring places, was confiscated to the King of Prussia. The states of Bremen were filled with Danish garrisons. At the same time the Russians overran Finland, and beat the Swedes, who, being inferior in point of numbers, and their resolution forsaking them, began to lose their superiority of valor over enemies who now were inured to war.

To complete the misfortunes of Sweden, the king was obstinately determined to remain at Demotica, and still flattered himself with the hope of having assistance from the Turks, in whom he ought no longer to have reposed any confidence.

Ibrahim Molla, that bold vizier who had been so obstinately bent on a war with the Russians, in opposition to the favorite, was strangled between two doors.

The position of vizier had become so dangerous that no one dared to accept of it; it continued vacant six months. At last the favorite Ali-Coumourgi assumed the title of grand vizier. Then were all the hopes of the King of Sweden crushed at once. He knew Coumourgi so much the better, after the manner in which he had been served by that favorite when both their interests happened to coincide.

Charles had now been eleven months at Demotica, buried in sloth and oblivion; and the sudden suc-

cession of this extreme indolence, after the most violent exercises, had at last actually given him the disease which he had at first feigned. His death was believed throughout Europe. The council of regency which he had established at Stockholm when he left his capital, no longer received any despatches from him. The senate came in a body to the Princess Ulrica Eleonora, the king's sister, and entreated her to take the regency into her own hands during the long absence of her brother. She accepted the proposal; but when she perceived that the senate wanted to oblige her to make a peace with the Czar and the King of Denmark, who attacked Sweden on every side, and well knowing that her brother would never ratify such a peace, she resigned the regency, and sent into Turkey a long detail of the transaction.

Charles received his sister's packet at Demotica. The arbitrary principles which he had imbibed at his birth, made him forget that Sweden had formerly been free, and that in ancient times the senate governed the kingdom conjointly with the king. He regarded this body as a parcel of domestics, who wanted to usurp the command of the house in their master's absence: he wrote to them that if they pretended to assume the reins of government, he would send them one of his boots, from which he would oblige them to receive their orders.

To prevent therefore these pretended attempts upon his authority in Sweden, and to defend his kingdom, now in the last extremity, deprived of all

hopes of assistance from the Ottoman Porte, and relying on himself alone, he signified to the grand vizier his desire of departing and returning by the way of Germany.

M. des Alleurs, the French ambassador, who was charged with the affairs of Sweden, made the proposal in his name. "Well," said the vizier to him, "did not I tell you that a year would not pass before the King of Sweden would desire to depart? Tell him it is at his choice to go or stay; but let him come to a fixed determination, and appoint the day of his departure, that he may not a second time embarrass us as he did at Bender."

Count des Alleurs softened the harshness of this answer to the king. The day was accordingly fixed; but before Charles would leave Turkey, he resolved to display the pomp of a great king, though involved in all the difficulties of a fugitive. He gave Grothusen the title of his ambassador extraordinary, and sent him to take leave in form at Constantinople, followed by a retinue of eighty persons, all superbly dressed.

The divers stratagems to which he was reduced in order to raise a sufficiency to defray this expense, were as humiliating as the embassy was pompous.

M. des Alleurs lent the king forty thousand crowns. Grothusen had agents at Constantinople, who borrowed in his name, at the rate of fifty per cent. interest, a thousand crowns of a Jew, two hundred pistoles of an English merchant, and a thousand livres of a Turk.

In this manner did they amass a sum sufficient

to enable them to act, in the presence of the divan the brilliant comedy of the Swedish embassy. Grothusen received at Constantinople all the honors that the Porte usually pay to kings' ambassadors extraordinary on the day of their audience. The design of all this parade was only to obtain money from the grand vizier; but that minister was inexorable.

Grothusen proposed the borrowing a million from the Porte. The vizier replied coldly that his master knew how to give when he thought proper, but that it was beneath his dignity to lend; that the king should be furnished with abundance of everything necessary for his journey in a manner worthy of the person that sent him back; and that the Porte perhaps might even make him a present in gold bullion, but that was not to be looked upon as certain.

At last, on the 1st of October, 1714, the King of Sweden set out on his journey from Turkey. A capigi pacha, with six chiaoux, came to attend him from the castle of Demirtash, where he had resided for some days past. He presented him, in the name of the Grand Seignior, with a large tent of scarlet embroidered with gold, a sabre with the guard mounted with jewels, and eight beautiful Arabian horses, with fine saddles, and stirrups of massy silver. It is not beneath the dignity of history to observe that the Arabian equerry who had been in charge of the horses gave the king an account of their genealogy—a custom which has been long established among these people, who seem to

pay more attention to the nobility of their horses than to that of their men; which is not perhaps so unreasonable, as among animals those breeds of which care is taken, and which are not crossed, are never found to degenerate.

Sixty wagons loaded with all sorts of provisions and three hundred horse comprised the convoy. The capigi pacha, understanding that several Turks had lent money to the King of Sweden's attendants at an immoderate interest, told his Majesty that usury being contrary to the Mahometan law, he entreated him to liquidate all these debts, and to order his resident, whom he should leave at Constantinople, to pay no more than the capital. "No," said the king; "if any of my domestics have given bills for an hundred crowns, I will pay them, though they should not even have received ten."

He made a proposal to his creditors to follow him, with an assurance that he would not only pay them what he owed, but all their expenses. Several of them went to Sweden, and Grothusen took care to see them paid.

The Turks, in order to show the greater deference to their royal guest, made him travel by very short stages; but this respectful motion was ill suited to the impatient spirit of the king. During the journey, he got up at three in the morning, according to his usual custom. As soon as he was dressed, he went himself and awakened the capigi and chiaoux, and ordered the march during the darkness of the night. The Turkish gravity was

deranged by this new method of travelling; but Charles took a pleasure in seeing them embarrassed, and said it was some little revenge for the affair of Bender.

About the time that Charles reached the frontiers of Turkey, Stanislaus was leaving them by a different road, and going into Germany, with a view of retiring into the Duchy of Deux-Ponts, a province bordering on the Palatinate of Alsace and the Rhine, and which had belonged to the kings of Sweden ever since Charles X., the successor of Christina, had united it to the crown. Charles assigned to Stanislaus the revenue of this duchy, estimated at that time at about seventy thousand crowns. Such was the issue of so many projects, wars, and expectations! Stanislaus could and would have made an advantageous treaty with Augustus; but the inflexible obstinacy of Charles made him lose his lands and real possessions in Poland to preserve the title of king.\*

The King of Sweden, on his arrival at the confines of Germany, was made to understand that the emperor had given orders to receive him in every part of his dominions with a becoming magnificence.

\* Stanislaus remained in the duchy of Deux-Ponts till the death of Charles XII., when the province reverted to a member of the Palatine family. He then chose a retreat in Wissemburg, in French Alsace. Mr. Sum, envoy from King Augustus, making a complaint of this to the Duke of Orleans, regent of France, the Duke returned him an answer in these remarkable words: "Sir, tell the king, your master, that France has ever been the asylum of kings in distress."

The towns and villages through which the quartermasters had previously fixed his route had made great preparations for receiving him. All the people waited with impatience to see this extraordinary man pass by, whose victories and misfortunes, whose most trifling actions, and even his keeping his bed, had made so great a noise in Europe and Asia. But Charles had no desire to bear the fatigue of so much pomp, or to exhibit as a spectacle the prisoner of Bender. He had even resolved never to re-enter Stockholm until he should have repaired his losses by a change of fortune.

When he arrived at Targowitz on the frontiers of Transylvania, after he had taken leave of his Turkish convoy, he assembled his attendants in a barn, and told them all not to give themselves any uneasiness about his person, but to proceed with all possible expedition to Stralsund in Pomerania, on the coast of the Baltic Sea, about three hundred leagues from the place where they then were.

He took nobody with him except two officers, Rosen and Düring, and taking a cheerful leave of the rest of his attendants, left them filled with fear, sorrow, and astonishment. To disguise himself he put on a black wig, as he always wore his own hair, a gold-laced hat, a grey coat, and blue cloak, and, taking the name of a German officer, rode post with his two fellow-travellers.

He avoided in his way as much as possible the territories of either his declared or secret enemies, taking the road through Hungary, Moravia, Bava



ria, Austria, Wirtemberg, the Palatinate, Westphalia, and Mecklenburg; by which means he almost made the tour of Germany, and lengthened his journey by one half. Having ridden the whole first day without intermission, young During, who was not so much inured to these excessive fatigues, fainted as he was dismounting. The king, who was determined not to stop a moment on the road, asked During, as soon as he came to himself, how much money he had. Upon During's replying he had about a thousand crowns in gold, "Give me half of them," said the king; "I see you are not in a condition to follow me; I will therefore finish the journey by myself." During begged he would permit him to repose himself but for three hours, assuring him that by that time he should be able to remount his horse and attend his majesty, and conjured him to think of the dangers to which he was going to expose himself. The king, inexorable, made him give him five hundred crowns, and called for horses. During, alarmed at this resolution, bethought himself of an innocent stratagem: he took the postmaster aside, and pointing to the King of Sweden, "That gentleman," said he, "is my cousin; we are travelling together upon the same business; he sees that I am ill, and yet will not wait for me even for three hours: give him, I beseech you, the worst horse in your stable; and let me have a cart or any post-carriage."

He slipped two ducats into the postmaster's hand, who obeyed his orders exactly. The king had a horse given him that was both lame and restive:

such was the equipage with which the monarch set out at ten o'clock at night, amidst darkness, rain, wind, and snow. His fellow-traveller, after having slept a few hours, followed him in a cart drawn by strong horses. About daybreak, at the distance of a few miles, he overtook the king, who, not being able to make his horse move on, was travelling on foot to the next stage. Charles was obliged to get into During's cart, where he slept upon the straw. Thus they continued their journey, by day on horseback, and sleeping by night in a cart, without stopping in any place.

After sixteen days' travelling, not without danger of being taken more than once, they arrived at last, on the twenty-first of November, in the year 1714, at the gates of the town of Stralsund, about one in the morning.

The king called to the sentinel, and told him that he was a courier despatched from Turkey by the King of Sweden, and that he must speak that moment with General Ducker, the governor of the place. The sentinel answered that it was too late; that the governor was gone to bed; and that he must wait till break of day.

The king replied that he came upon business of importance, and told him that if he did not instantly go and awaken the governor, he should be punished the next morning. A sergeant at last went and called up the governor. Ducker imagined that it might perhaps be one of the king's generals; he therefore caused the gates to be opened, and the courier was introduced into his chamber.

Ducker, half asleep, asked him "what news of the King of Sweden." The king, taking him by the arm, "What," said he, "Ducker, have my most faithful subjects forgotten me?" The general immediately recollected the king, though he could scarce believe his eyes; and throwing himself from the bed, embraced his master's knees with tears of joy. The news was in an instant spread through the town. Every one got up: the soldiers surrounded the governor's house. The streets were crowded with the inhabitants, asking each other whether it was true that the king was come. Every window was illuminated, wine ran through the streets, amidst the blaze of a thousand flambeaux, and the discharges of the artillery.

In the meantime the king was put into a bed, in which he had not been for above sixteen days: his boots were obliged to be cut from his legs, they being so much swollen by his extreme fatigue. As he had neither linen nor clothes, they furnished him with as good a wardrobe as the town could afford with all expedition. When he had slept a few hours he arose, and went directly to review his troops, and visit his fortifications. The same day he despatched orders into all parts for renewing the war against his enemies with greater vigor than ever. These particulars, so conformable to the extraordinary character of Charles XII., were communicated to me by M. Fabricius, and afterwards confirmed by Court Croissy, ambassador to the King of Sweden.

The Christian part of Europe was now in a

situation far different from that in which it was when Charles quitted it in 1709.. The war which had so long raged throughout the south—that is to say, in Germany, England, Holland, France, Spain, Portugal and Italy—was now terminated. This general peace had been brought about by some private intrigues in the English court. The Earl of Oxford, an able minister, and Lord Bolingbroke, one of the greatest geniuses and the most eloquent orator of the age, had prevailed over the famous Duke of Marlborough, and persuaded the queen to make a peace with Louis XIV. of France, who no longer having England for his enemy, soon obliged the powers to come to an accommodation. Philip V., the grandson of Louis XIV., began to reign peaceably over the ruins of the Spanish monarchy. The Emperor of Germany became master of Naples and Flanders, and established himself in his vast dominions; and Louis himself aspired no higher than to finish in peace his long career.

Anne, Queen of England, died on the 10th of August, 1713, hated by half the nation for having given peace to so many kingdoms. Her brother, James Stuart, an unhappy prince, excluded from the throne almost at his birth, was not at that time in England to claim the succession (which new laws would have given him if his party could have prevailed), and George I., Elector of Hanover, was unanimously acknowledged King of Great Britain. The throne devolved to that elector, not by right of blood, though descended from a daughter of James, but by virtue of an act of Parliament.

George, called in an advanced age to the government of a people whose language he did not understand, and to whom he was an entire stranger, regarded himself rather as Elector of Hanover than King of England. His whole ambition was to aggrandise his German dominions. He almost always went once a year to visit his hereditary subjects, by whom he was adored. In other respects he took more pleasure in living like a private man than a sovereign. The pomp of royalty was to him an insupportable burden. He passed his time with a few old courtiers, with whom he lived in great familiarity. He was not the king that made the greatest figure in Europe; but he was one of the wisest princes of the age, and perhaps the only one that experienced on a throne the pleasures of friendship and a private life. Such were the principal monarchs and such the situation of the south of Europe.

The changes that happened in the north were of another nature. Its kings were engaged in war, and united themselves against the King of Sweden.

Augustus had been long restored to the throne of Poland by the assistance of the Czar, and with the consent of the Emperor of Germany, Anne of England, and the States-General, who, though all guarantees of the treaty of Altranstad when Charles XII. could have imposed laws, abandoned their engagement when they had nothing more to fear from him.

But Augustus did not enjoy a tranquil authority. The republic of Poland no sooner recalled their

king, than their apprehensions of arbitrary power began to revive: the nation was in arms to oblige him to conform to the *pacta conventa*, a sacred contract between the king and the people, and seemed to have recalled its sovereign for no other purpose than to declare war against him. At the commencement of these troubles, the name of Stanislaus was not once mentioned: his party seemed to be annihilated; no more remembrance of the King of Sweden remained in Poland than of a torrent, which, in the violence of its course, had for a time occasioned a change in the face of nature.

Pultowa and the absence of Charles XII., by causing the fall of Stanislaus, had drawn on the ruin also of the Duke of Holstein, Charles's nephew, who had not long before been despoiled of his dominions by the King of Denmark. The King of Sweden had felt a sincere regard for the father, and was therefore deeply affected and mortified with the misfortunes of the son; the rather as, having no other object than glory, the fall of these princes whom he had either made or restored, was by him felt as sensibly as the loss of so many provinces.

Every one was at liberty to enrich himself with the ruin of Charles's fortune. Frederick-William, the new King of Prussia, who appeared to have as much inclination for war as his father had had for peace, began by seizing on Stettin and part of Pomerania, as an equivalent for four hundred thousand crowns which he had advanced to the King of Denmark and to the Czar.

George, Elector of Hanover—now become King

of England—had likewise confiscated into his hands the duchy of Bremen and Verden, which the King of Denmark had assigned to him as a deposit for sixty thousand pistoles. Thus did they dispose of the spoils of Charles XII., and those who possessed any of his dominions as pledges, became, from their interests, as dangerous enemies as those who had taken them.

As to the Czar, he was doubtless the most to be feared: his former defeats, his victories, his very faults, his perseverance to instruct himself, and then to communicate that knowledge to his subjects, together with his incessant labors, had made him a great man in every respect. Riga was already taken; Livonia, Ingria, Carelia, half of Finland, so many provinces that had been conquered by Charles's ancestors, were now subjected to the Russian yoke.

Peter Alexiowitz, who twenty years before, had not a single vessel in the Baltic, at this time beheld himself master of that sea, at the head of a fleet of thirty ships of the line.

One of these ships had been built by his own hands; he being the best carpenter, the best admiral, and the best pilot in the north. There was not a difficult passage of the Gulf of Bothnia to the ocean which he had not sounded himself; and having thus joined the labors of a common sailor to the experience of a philosopher and the plans of an emperor, he arrived by degrees, and by dint of victories, to the rank of admiral, in the

same manner as he had become a general in the land service.

While Prince Gallitzin, a general formed under his own auspices, and one of those who seconded his enterprises the best, completed the conquest of Finland, took the town of Vasa, and beat the Swedes; the emperor put to sea, in order to take the island of Alan, situated in the Baltic, about twelve leagues from Stockholm.

He set out on this expedition in the beginning of July, 1714, at the time that his rival Charles XII. was keeping his bed at Demotica. He embarked at Gronslot port, which he had built some years before, about four miles from Petersburg. The new port, the fleet which it contained, the officers, the sailors, were all the work of his own hands; and wherever he turned his eyes, he could behold nothing but what he himself had in some measure created.

The Russian fleet, which consisted of thirty ships of the line, eighty galleys, and a hundred half galleys, found itself on the 15th of July on the coast of Alan. There were 20,000 soldiers on board: Admiral Apraxin was commander-in-chief; and the Russian emperor served in the capacity of rear-admiral. On the 16th the Swedish fleet, commanded by Vice-Admiral Erinchild, came up; and, though weaker by two-thirds, maintained a fight for the space of three hours. The Czar attacked Erinchild's ship, and took her after an obstinate engagement.



THE day of the victory he landed 16,000 men on the isle of Alan; and having taken a number of Swedish soldiers that had not been able to get on board Erinchild's fleet, he carried them off in his own ships. He returned into his harbor of Gronslot with Erinchild's large ship, three others of less size, one frigate, and six galleys, which he had made himself master of in this engagement.

Having left Gronslot he arrived at Petersburg, followed by the whole of his victorious fleet, together with the ships taken from the enemy. He was saluted by a triple discharge of a hundred and fifty pieces of cannon; after which he made a triumphal entry, which flattered his vanity still more than at Moscow, because he received these honors in his favorite town, where but ten years before there was not a single hut, and where at that time he beheld thirty-four thousand five hundred houses; in short, because he saw himself not only at the head of a victorious navy, but of the first Russian fleet that was ever seen in the Baltic sea, and in a country in which, before his time, the very name of a fleet was unknown.

Almost the same ceremonies were observed at Petersburg which had decorated the triumph at Moscow. The Swedish vice-admiral was the principal ornament of this new triumph. Peter Alexiowitz appeared as rear-admiral. A Russian boyard named Romanodowsky, who usually represented the Czar on these solemn occasions, was seated on a throne surrounded by twelve senators. The rear-

admiral presented to him a relation of his victory, and was declared vice-admiral in consideration of his services; a whimsical ceremony, but at the same time proper in a country where military subordination was one of the novelties which the Czar had introduced.

The Emperor of Russia, at last victorious over the Swedes by sea and land, and having assisted in driving them from Poland, began to exercise his authority there in his turn. He had made himself a mediator between Augustus and the republic; a boast perhaps not inferior to that of creating a king. This honor, and indeed all the good fortune of Charles, had fallen to the Czar, who certainly made a better use of these advantages than his rival, as his successes were so managed as to contribute to the interest of his country. If he took a town, the principal artisans in it carried their industry along with them to St. Petersburg. The manufactures, the arts and sciences of the provinces which he conquered in Sweden were transported into Muscovy; his dominions were enriched by his victories; a circumstance that makes him the most excusable of all conquerors.

Sweden, on the contrary, despoiled of almost all her provinces beyond sea, had neither commerce, money, nor credit. Her veteran troops, which were formerly so formidable, had either fallen in battle or perished with hunger. More than a hundred thousand Swedes were slaves in the vast dominions of the Czar; and about the same number had been

**sold to the Turks and Tartars. The human species visibly diminished, but hope revived as soon as the king was known to be at Stralsund.**

**The impressions of respect and admiration for him were still so strongly implanted in the minds of his subjects that the youth of the country came in crowds to enlist under his banners, though their native soil wanted hands to cultivate it.**

## BOOK VIII.

### CONCLUSION.

Charles gives his Sister in marriage to the Prince of Hesse—Is besieged at Stralsund, and escapes to Sweden—Enterprise of Baron de Gortz, his prime minister—Plan of a reconciliation with the Czar, and of a descent upon England—Charles besieges Frederickshall in Norway—Is killed—His character—Gortz is beheaded.

THE king, in the midst of these preparations, gave his only surviving sister, Ulrica-Eleonora, in marriage to Frederick, Prince of Hesse Cassel. The queen dowager, grandmother of Charles XII. and the princess, at that time in the eightieth year of her age, did the honors of this festival on the 4th of April, 1715, in the palace of Stockholm, and died a little time after.

The marriage was not honored with the presence of the king; he was still at Stralsund, finishing the fortifications of that important place, threatened with a siege by the Kings of Denmark and Prussia. He declared his new brother-in-law generalissimo of

all his forces in Sweden. This prince had served the States-General in their wars with the French, and was esteemed a good general; a qualification which contributed not a little to the result of his marriage.

Misfortunes now followed one another as rapidly as victories had formerly done. In the month of June 1715 the German troops of the King of England, with those of Denmark, invested the strong town of Wismar; the Danes and Saxons united formed about 36,000 men, who marched towards Stralsund, to lay siege to that place. The Kings of Denmark and Prussia sank five Swedish ships near to Stralsund. The Czar was then in the Baltic, with twenty large ships of war, and a hundred and fifty transports, on board of which were thirty thousand men. He menaced a descent upon Sweden; sometimes advancing near to the coast of Helsingborg, and at others appearing before Stockholm. All Sweden was in arms upon the coasts, every moment expecting an invasion. In the meantime the Czar's land forces drove the Swedes from post to post, until they had dispossessed them of all the places they still held in Finland, toward the Gulf of Bothnia; but the Czar carried his conquests no farther.

At the mouth of the Oder—a river that divides Pommerania, and after washing the walls of Stettin, falls into the Baltic Sea—is the little isle of Usedom. This place is of great importance on account of its situation, which commands the Oder both on the right and left; so that whoever is master of

this island is at the same time master of the navigation of the river. The King of Prussia had dislodged the Swedes from this place, and had taken possession of it as well as of Stettin, which he confiscated; and all, as he said, *pour l'amour de la paix*, "for the love of peace." The Swedes had retaken Usedom in the month of May, 1715. They had two forts there; one of which was the fort of Suine, upon the branch of the Oder that bore the same name; the other, a place of more consequence, was called Pennamender, situated upon the other branch of the river. The King of Sweden had but two hundred and fifty Pomeranian soldiers to defend two forts and the whole island, which was commanded by an old Swedish officer named Kuze-Slerp, whose name deserves to be preserved.

On the 4th of August the King of Prussia sent fifteen hundred foot and eight hundred dragoons to make a descent upon the island, and they landed without opposition near the fort of Suine. The Swedish commander abandoned this fort to the enemy, as being the least important; and as he could not safely divide his men, he retired with his little troop to the castle of Pennamender, resolute to defend it to the last extremity.

There was therefore a necessity of besieging it in form. A train of artillery was embarked at Stettin for this purpose, and the Prussian troops were reinforced with a thousand foot and four hundred horse. On the 18th of August the trenches were opened in two places, and the fort

was briskly battered with cannon and mortars. During the siege, a Swedish soldier, who was charged with a private letter from Charles XII., found means to land on the island, to get into the fort of Pennamender, and to deliver the letter to the commander: it was couched in the following words: —“Do not fire until the enemy come to the brink of the fosse; defend the place to the last drop of your blood. I commend you to your good fortune. CHARLES.”

Slerp, having read the note, resolved to obey, and to lay down his life, as he was ordered, for the service of his master. On the 22d, at the break of day, the enemy began the assault. The besieged having kept back their fire till they saw the besiegers on the brink of the fosse, killed a great number of them; but the ditch was full, the breach enlarged, and the assailants too numerous. They entered the castle at two different places at one time. The commander thought of nothing but of selling his life as dear as possible, and obeying his master's letter. He abandoned the breaches through which the enemy entered; intrenched his little company, who had all the courage and fidelity to follow him, behind a bastion, and posted them in such a manner that they could not be surrounded. The enemy came up to him, astonished that he did not ask for quarter. He fought for a whole hour; and after having lost the half of his men, was at last killed, together with his lieutenant and major. After this, the surviving few, amounting to a hundred soldiers and one officer, begged their lives,

and were made prisoners of war. They found Charles's letter in the commander's pocket, and carried it to the King of Prussia.

At the time that Charles lost Usedom and the neighboring isles, which were soon after taken, he learnt that Wismar was ready to surrender; that he no longer possessed a fleet, and that Sweden was threatened with an invasion. He himself was in Stralsund, and that place was already besieged by thirty-six thousand men.

Stralsund, a town become famous throughout Europe for the siege which the King of Sweden sustained in it, is the strongest place in Pomerania. It is situated between the Baltic sea and the Lake of Franken, upon the Straits of Gella; the only entrance by land being by a narrow causeway, defended by a citadel, and by fortifications which were imagined inaccessible. It had a garrison of about nine thousand men, and, what was of most importance, it was commanded by the King of Sweden himself. The Kings of Denmark and Prussia undertook the siege of this place with an army of six-and-thirty thousand men, composed of Prussians, Danes, and Saxons.

The honor of besieging Charles XII. was so powerful a motive, that they soon surmounted every obstacle, and opened the trenches in the night between the 19th and 20th of October, 1715. The King of Sweden, at the beginning of the siege, said that he could not comprehend how a place well fortified, and provided with a sufficient garrison, could be taken. Not but that in the course of his



past victories he had taken several places himself, but hardly ever by a regular siege: the terror of his arms had carried everything before it; besides, he never judged of other people by himself, but always entertained too low an opinion of his enemies. The besiegers carried on their works with vigor and resolution, and were assisted by a very singular accident.

It is well known that the Baltic sea neither ebbs nor flows. The intrenchments which covered the town, and which were defended on the west by an impassable morass, and by the sea on the east, seemed to be secure from every assault. Nobody had ever noticed that, when the west wind blew with any violence, the waves of the Baltic were driven back in such a manner as to leave but three feet depth of water under the fortifications, which had always been supposed to be washed by so great a depth of water as to be impracticable. A soldier having fallen from the top of the fortifications into the sea, was astonished to find a bottom: he imagined that this discovery might make his fortune, and accordingly deserted, and went to the quarters of Count Wackerbarth, general of the Saxon troops, to inform him that the sea was fordable, and that he might penetrate without much difficulty to the Swedish fortifications. The King of Prussia did not delay to profit by this intelligence.

In the middle of the next night, the west wind still continuing, Lieutenant-Colonel Koppen entered the water, followed by eighteen hundred men; two

thousand advanced at the same time upon the causeway that led to the fort; all the Prussian artillery fired, and the Danes and Prussians gave an alarm on the other side.

The Swedes imagined themselves sure of destroying the two thousand men whom they saw advancing with so much apparent rashness upon the causeway; but all of a sudden, Koppen, with his eighteen hundred men, entered the intrenchment on the side towards the sea. The Swedes, surrounded and surprised, could make no resistance, and the post was carried after a terrible carnage. Some of the Swedes fled towards the town; the besiegers pursued them thither, and entered pell-mell along with the fugitives. Two officers and four Saxon soldiers were already on the drawbridge, which the Swedes had just time to raise; so that the men were taken, and the town saved for that time.

The enemy found in the fort twenty-four pieces of cannon, which they immediately turned against Stralsund. The siege was pushed with such vigor and confidence, as this success could not fail to inspire. The town was cannonaded and bombarded almost without intermission.

Opposite to Stralsund, in the Baltic sea, is the isle of Rugen, which serves as a bulwark to that place, and into which the garrison and citizens might have retired, had they had boats to have transported them thither. This island was of great consequence to Charles. He saw very clearly that if the enemy were once masters of it, he should find himself besieged both by sea and land;

and perhaps be reduced to such great extremities, that he must either bury himself in the ruins of Stralsund, or become a prisoner to those very enemies whom he had so long despised, and upon whom he had imposed the most severe laws. But notwithstanding all this, the unhappy situation of his affairs did not permit him to place a sufficient garrison in Rugen, in which there were not more than two thousand men.

His enemies had been employed for three months before in making all the necessary preparations for a descent upon this island, upon which it is exceedingly difficult to effect a landing. At last, having finished a number of boats, the Prince of Anhalt, with the assistance of favorable weather, landed twelve thousand men upon Rugen on the 15th of November. The king, who seemed to be present everywhere, was at that time in the island; he had just before joined his two thousand men, who were intrenched near a small port three leagues from the place where the enemy had landed. He immediately put himself at the head of this little troop, and, observing the most profound silence, advanced in the middle of the night towards the enemy. The Prince of Anhalt had already intrenched his forces, with a precaution which appeared unnecessary. The officers commanding under him had no idea of being attacked the very first night, and imagined Charles to be at Stralsund; but the Prince of Anhalt, who well knew what Charles was capable of, had caused a deep fosse to be sunk, fenced with a *chevaux-de-frise*, and taken all his

measures with as much circumspection as if he had a superior army to contend with.

At two in the morning Charles came up with his enemies without making the least noise. His soldiers saying to each other, "Pull up the chevaux-de-frise," the words were overheard by the sentinels, the alarm was immediately given through the camp, and the enemy were instantly under arms. The king, having taken up the chevaux-de-frise, perceived a deep fosse before him. "Ah!" said he, "is it possible? I did not expect this." However, this surprise did not discourage him. He knew not the number of troops landed; the enemy also, on their side, were ignorant what a small number they had to engage with. The darkness of the night seemed favorable to Charles; he took his resolution in a moment and jumped into the ditch, accompanied by the bravest of his men, and instantly followed by the rest. The chevaux-de-frise which were plucked up, the levelled earth, the trunks and branches of such trees as they could find, and the carcasses of the soldiers that were killed by random shot, served for fascines. The king, the generals, and the bravest of the officers and soldiers, mounted upon one another's shoulders, as in an assault. The battle was now fought in the enemy's camp. The impetuosity of the Swedes soon threw the Danes and Prussians into confusion; but the numbers were too unequal. The Swedes were repulsed, after fighting for a quarter of an hour, and were obliged to repass the fosse. The Prince of Anhalt pursued them into the plain, but

knew not that it was Charles XII. that fled before him. That unfortunate king rallied his troops in the open field, and the battle was renewed with equal obstinacy on both sides. Grothusen, the king's favorite, and General Dardoff fell dead at his feet. In the heat of the battle Charles passed over the body of the latter, who was still breathing. During, the only person who had accompanied him in his journey from Turkey to Stralsund, was killed before his face.

In the midst of the tumult, a Danish lieutenant, whose name I have never been able to learn, recognized the king; and seizing his sword with one hand, and with the other pulling him violently by the hair, said to him, "Yield, sire, or I kill you." The king had a pistol in his belt, which he fired with his left hand at that officer, who died of the wound the next morning. The name of King Charles, which the Dane had pronounced, immediately drew a crowd of the enemy together. The king was surrounded, and received a musket-shot in his left breast: this wound, which he called a contusion, was two fingers deep. The king was on foot, and in danger of either being killed or taken prisoner. Count Poniatowsky was fighting at this time near his majesty's person. He had saved his life at Pultowa, and had now the good fortune to save it once more in the battle of Rugen; he set him on horseback.

The Swedes retired to a part of the island called Alteferra, where there was a fort, of which they were still masters. From thence the king repassed

over to Stralsund, obliged to abandon his brave troops, who had so well seconded him in this enterprise; and two days after they were all made prisoners of war.

Among the prisoners was that unhappy French regiment, composed of the shattered remains of the battle of Höchstet, which had entered into the service of Augustus, and afterwards into that of the King of Sweden. The greatest part of the soldiers was now incorporated into a new regiment, commanded by the Prince of Anhalt's son, who was their fourth master.

The commander of this wandering regiment in the Isle of Rugen was the same Count de Villelongue, who had so generously exposed his life at Adrianople, in the service of Charles. He was taken prisoner with his troop, and was afterwards but poorly recompensed for all his service, labors, and sufferings.

The king, after **all** these prodigies of valor, which served only to weaken his forces, was the same as he had been at Bender, although shut up in Stralsund, and nearly being forced into it. He was shaken by nothing; he employed the day in making ditches and entrenchments behind the walls, and in the night he made sallies upon the enemy: in the meantime Stralsund was battered in breach: the bombs fell as thick as hail upon the houses, and half the town was reduced to ashes: the citizens, however, so far from complaining, were filled with the highest veneration for their royal master, whose fatigues, temperance, and courage,

astonished them; they were all become soldiers under him; they accompanied him in all his sallies, and served him in the place of a second garrison.

One day, as the king was dictating some letters to his secretary, to be sent to Sweden, a bomb fell on the house, pierced the roof, and burst near the apartment in which he was. One half of the floor was shattered to pieces; the closet where the king was employed, being partly formed out of a thick wall, did not suffer by the explosion; and by an astonishing piece of fortune, none of the splinters that flew about in the air entered at the closet-door, which happened to be open. The report of the bomb, and the noise it occasioned in the house, which seemed ready to tumble, made the secretary drop his pen. "What is the matter?" said the king with a placid air, "why do you not write?" The secretary could only say, "Ah, sire, the bomb!" "Well," replied the king, "what has the bomb to do with the letter I am dictating to you? Go on."

There was at this time an ambassador of France shut up with the King of Sweden in Stralsund. It was Monsieur Colbert, Count de Croissy, a lieutenant-general in the French army, brother to the Marquis de Torcy, the celebrated minister of state, and a relation of the famous Colbert, whose name ought to be immortal in France. To send a man into the trenches, or on an embassy, was pretty nigh the same thing to Charles XII. The king would talk with Croissy for whole hours together, in the most exposed places, while the soldiers were

falling on every side of them by the fire of the cannon and bombs, without appearing in the least sensible of the risk he ran, and the ambassador did not like to hint that there were more proper places to talk of business. This minister did everything he was able, before the siege began, to effect an accommodation between the Kings of Sweden and Prussia; but the demands of the latter were too high, and Charles would make no concessions. Count de Croissy derived no other satisfaction from his embassy, than the pleasure of enjoying the familiarity of that singular man. He often lay by his majesty upon the same cloak, and had, by partaking of all his dangers and fatigues, acquired a right of talking to him with freedom. Charles encouraged this boldness in those he loved; and would sometimes say to the Count de Croissy, "*Veni, maledicamus de rege; i. e.*, "Come, now let us make free with the character of the king." This account I had from the ambassador himself.

Croissy continued in the town till the 13th of November, when, having obtained permission from the enemy to depart with his baggage, he took leave of the king, whom he left amidst the ruins of Stralsund, with a garrison diminished by one half, and resolved to stand an assault.

In short, two days after, an assault was actually made upon the horn-work. The enemy twice took it, and twice were driven back. The king fought the whole time amidst his grenadiers; but at last numbers prevailed, and the besiegers remained masters of the place. Charles continued in the town



two days after this, expecting every moment a general assault. On the 21st he stayed till midnight upon a little ravelin that was entirely demolished by the bombs and cannon: the next day the principal officers conjured him not to stay in a place which it was no longer possible to defend; but his retreat was now become as dangerous as the place itself. The Baltic sea was covered with Russian and Danish ships, and there were no vessels in the harbor of Stralsund but one small boat with sails and oars. So many dangers, which would render his retreat illustrious, determined Charles to attempt it. He embarked in the night, on the 20th of December, 1715, accompanied by ten persons only. They were obliged to break the ice, with which the water of the port was covered—a laborious task, which employed them several hours, before the boat could sail freely. The enemy's admirals had positive orders not to suffer Charles to escape from Stralsund, but to take him dead or alive. Happily they were under the wind, and were not able to get to him; but he ran a still greater risk in passing by a place called La Barbette, in the Isle of Rugen, where the Danes had erected a battery of twelve cannon, from which they fired upon him. The mariners spread every sail, and plied every oar, to get clear of the enemy; but, notwithstanding, a cannon ball killed two men by the king's side, and another shattered the mast of the boat. In the midst of these dangers, the king escaped unhurt, and at last came up with two of his own ships that were cruising in the Baltic. The next day Stral-

sund surrendered, and the garrison were made prisoners of war. Charles landed at Isted in Scania, from which place he repaired to Carelscrona, in a condition very different from what he was in, when, about fifteen years before, he set sail from that harbor, in a ship of 120 guns, to give laws to the north.

Being so near his capital, it was expected that, after such a long absence, he would visit that place; but his design was never to enter it again, till he had obtained some signal victory. Besides, he could not bear the thoughts of again seeing a people by whom he was beloved, and whom, nevertheless, he was obliged to oppress, in order to enable him to defend himself against his enemies. He only wanted to see his sister, with whom he appointed an interview on the banks of the lake Weter, in Ostrogothia, whither he rode post, attended only by a single domestic, and returned after having spent a day with her.

From Carelscrona, where he sojourned during the winter, he issued orders for raising men throughout his whole kingdom. He thought that his subjects were born only to follow him to the field of battle, and had accustomed them to think so too. Young people were enlisted at the age of fifteen; and in several villages there were none left but old men, women, and children, and in many places women only were seen ploughing the land.

It was still more difficult to procure a fleet. To supply the want of this, commissions were granted to the owners of privateers, who, upon obtaining

certain privileges, unreasonable in themselves, and destructive to the country, equipped a few ships: these efforts were the last resources of Sweden. To defray the expenses of these preparations, he was obliged to take the substance of the people. Every kind of extortion was invented, under the name of taxes and duties. Strict search was made in every house, and one-half of the provisions found in them was carried to the king's magazines: all the iron in the kingdom was bought up for his use, which government paid for in paper, and sold out again for ready money. A tax was laid on every one who wore any mixture of silk in their clothes, or wore either perukes or gilt swords. A very heavy tax was also laid on chimneys. The people, oppressed with such a load of taxes, would have revolted under any other king; but the poorest peasant in Sweden knew that his master led a life still more hard and frugal than himself; so that every one submitted, without murmuring, to those hardships which the king was the first to suffer.

The public danger served to make the Swedish people forget their private misfortunes. They expected every moment to see their country invaded by the Russians, Danes, Prussians, Saxons, and even by the English: and this fear was so rooted, and so strong, that those who had money or valuable effects buried them in the earth.

In effect, an English fleet had already appeared in the Baltic, though its particular destination was not known; and the Czar had given his word to the King of Denmark that the Russians should join

the Danes in the spring of 1716, in order to make a descent upon Sweden.

But it was an extreme surprise to all Europe, which was interested in the fortunes of Charles XII., when, instead of defending his own country, threatened as it was by so many hostile powers, he passed over, in the month of March 1716, into Norway, with 20,000 men.

No general had been known since Hannibal, who, from inability to defend himself at home, had undertaken to carry the war into the heart of his enemies' dominions. The Prince of Hesse, his brother-in-law, accompanied him in this expedition.

There is no travelling from Sweden to Norway but through the most dangerous defiles; and when these are passed, one is continually meeting with so many lakes of water, formed by the sea amongst the rocks, that there is a necessity for making bridges every day. A small number of Danes might have stopped the progress of the whole Swedish army, but this sudden invasion they had not foreseen. Europe was still more astonished that the Czar remained quiet in the midst of all these mighty events, and that he did not make a descent upon Sweden, as had formerly been stipulated between him and his allies.

This inactivity was owing to one of the greatest, and, at the same time, most difficult schemes that ever was formed by human imagination. The Baron Henry de Gortz, a native of Franconia, and a Baron *in capite* of the empire, having rendered several important offices to the King of Sweden

during his stay at Bender, had now become his favorite and first minister. Never was there a man so bold, and at the same time so artful; so full of expedients amidst misfortunes; so unbounded in his designs, or so active in their prosecution. He was afraid of nothing, and never scrupled at the means required to attain his object. He was alike lavish of gifts, promises, oaths, truth, and falsehood.

From Sweden he went to France, England, and Holland, to try those secret springs which he afterwards meant to put in motion. He was capable of disturbing all Europe, and, indeed, had such a plan in his mind. What his master was at the head of an army, he was in the cabinet; and in consequence he had acquired an ascendancy over Charles which no minister had possessed before.

The king, who, when only twenty years of age, had prescribed orders to Count Piper, now received instructions from Baron de Gortz; being so much the more submissive to the direction of that minister as his misfortunes obliged him to listen to the advice of others, and as Gortz never gave him any but such as was conformable to his courage. Gortz remarked that of all the princes united against Sweden, George, Elector of Hanover and King of England, was the one against whom Charles was most highly incensed, because, while he was the only one he had never offended, George had entered into the quarrel under the pretext of allaying it, but in reality to keep Bremen and Verden, to which he seemed to have no other right than that of

having bought them for a trifle from the King of Denmark, to whom, after all, they did not belong.

He also suspected that the Czar was secretly dissatisfied with his allies, who had all conspired to hinder him from acquiring an establishment in Germany, where that monarch, who had already become too formidable, wanted only to obtain a footing. Wismar, the only town which still remained to the Swedes on the frontiers of Germany, on the 14th of February 1716, surrendered to the Danes and Prussians, who would not even suffer the Russian troops then in Mecklenburg to be present at the siege. Similar jealousies, repeated for two years together, had alienated the Czar's mind from the common cause, and perhaps prevented the ruin of Sweden. There are many instances of several states in alliance being conquered by a single power, but scarcely any of a great empire being totally subdued by several allies; for if their united forces happen for a time to humble it, their divisions soon give it an opportunity to retrieve its former greatness.

It had been in the power of the Czar, from the year 1714, to make a descent upon Sweden; but whether it was that he could not perfectly agree with the kings of Poland, England, Denmark, and Prussia (allies justly jealous of his growing power), or that he did not think his troops as yet sufficiently inured to war to attack in their own territories a people whose very peasants had conquered the flower of the Danish forces, he still put off the execution of this enterprise.

But what had chiefly stopped the progress of his designs was the want of money. The Czar was one of the most powerful monarchs in the universe but was far from being one of the richest, his revenues, at that time, not exceeding twenty-four millions of livres: he had indeed discovered some mines of gold, silver, copper, and iron; but the profits arising from these were still uncertain, and the working of them was very expensive. He had likewise established an extensive commerce; its beginnings, however, brought him in nothing but hopes. The provinces which he had lately conquered increased his revenues, without augmenting his power and glory. It required a long time to heal the wounds of Livonia; a country extremely fertile, but desolated by fire, sword, and disease, and by a war of fifteen years' continuance, destitute of inhabitants, and as yet under impost to the conqueror. The large fleets he maintained, and the new enterprises which he was daily undertaking, contributed also to exhaust his finances. He had even been reduced to the miserable resource of raising the value of money; a remedy that can never cure the evils of a state, and is particularly prejudicial to a country which receives more commodities from strangers than it can supply them with.

This was a part of the foundation upon which Gortz had built his scheme of a revolution. He ventured to propose to the King of Sweden that he should purchase peace from the Russian emperor at any price whatsoever; representing to him that the

Czar was irritated against the Kings of Poland and England; and giving him to understand that were the forces of Peter Alexiowitz and Charles XII. united, they would strike terror throughout Europe.

There was no other way to accomplish this peace with the Czar than that of yielding up a great part of the provinces which lay to the east and north of the Baltic sea; but then he would represent to the king that in giving up these provinces, which the Czar had already possessed himself of, and which it was not in his power to retake, he might have the glory of at once replacing Stanislaus on the throne of Poland, replacing the son of James II. on that of England, and of re-establishing the Duke of Holstein in his dominions.

Charles, elated with these great ideas, took no time to consider the scheme, but immediately gave his minister a *carte blanche*. Gortz set out from Sweden, provided with a power which authorized him to do everything without restriction, and constituted him plenipotentiary to any prince with whom he might judge it necessary to negotiate. The first thing he did was to sound the court of Moscow by means of a Scotchman named Erskine, first physician to the Czar; a man entirely devoted to the interest of the Pretender; as was indeed almost every Scotchman who did not immediately subsist on the favors of the court of London.

The physician represented to Prince Menzikoff the importance and glory of such a project, with all the vivacity of a man who was himself interested in the cause. Prince Menzikoff relished the over-



ares, and the Czar approved them. Instead, therefore, of making a descent on Sweden, as he had agreed on with his allies, he wintered his troops in Mecklenburg, and went thither himself, under pretense of settling some disputes which were then arising between the Duke of Mecklenburg and the nobility of that country, but, in fact, to pursue his favorite design of obtaining a principality in Germany, and confident of persuading the Duke of Mecklenburg to sell him his sovereignty.

The allies were much irritated at this proceeding. They did not wish to have so formidable a neighbor, who, having once acquired possessions on the Baltic sea; to weaken the English by a civil war; and to draw all the trade of the north of Russia. He had even some thoughts of setting up Stanislaus afresh against Augustus, so that, the fire being kindled on every side, he might have it in his power either to quench or blow it up as he should find best conducive to his interest. With this view, he proposed to the Regent of France to act as a mediator between Sweden and Muscovy, and to make a league offensive and defensive with those two crowns and that of Spain. This treaty, which appeared so natural and so advantageous to the several nations concerned, and which placed the balance of power in Europe in their hands, was not accepted by the Duke of Orleans. He at that very time entered into engagements of a quite contrary nature: he made a league with the Emperor of Germany, and with King George of England. Reasons of state had now so altered the views of all the princes of Europe, that the

army were approaching to the defence of Norway; and Charles, being in want of provisions, was obliged to return to Sweden, there to wait the issue of his minister's mighty projects.

This scheme required at once inviolable secrecy and immense preparations—two things almost incompatible. Gortz even sought for assistance in the seas of Asia—assistance which, however odious it seemed, was not on that account less useful towards carrying out the project of a descent in Scotland, and which at any rate would have brought money, men, and vessels into Sweden.

The pirates of every nation, and particularly those of England, having entered into a mutual association, had long infested the seas of Europe and America; but having been pursued in every part without the least quarter, they had lately retired to the coasts of Madagascar, a large island to the east of Africa. These men were all of them desperadoes, and most of them famous for actions which wanted nothing but justice to render them truly heroic. They had for some time sought a leader who would receive them under his protection; but the laws of nations shut all the harbors in the world against them.

As soon as they were informed that Charles was returned to Sweden, they began to hope that that prince, passionately fond of war, forced to carry it on, and in want of both ships and men, would grant them favorable terms: they accordingly sent a deputy to Europe, on board of a Dutch vessel, to make a proposal to Baron de Gortz to receive them

into the port of Gottenburg, whither they offered to repair immediately, with sixty ships laden with riches.

The baron prevailed upon the king to agree to this proposition ; and the year following two Swedish gentlemen, named Cromstrom and Mendal, were sent to finish the negotiation with the Corsairs of Madagascar. But a more honorable and more powerful support was soon after found in the Cardinal Alberoni, a man of an extraordinary genius, who governed Spain long enough for his own glory, but too short a time for the grandeur of that kingdom.

He entered with ardor into the project of placing the son of James II. on the throne of England. Nevertheless, as he had just entered into the ministry, and had the affairs of Spain to establish before he could think of throwing other kingdoms into confusion, it was not likely that he would be able for many years to set his hand to this great work ; yet, notwithstanding, in less than two years he changed the face of affairs in Spain ; restored its credit in Europe ; engaged, as is generally imagined, the Turks to attack the Emperor of Germany ; and attempted, at the same time, to take away the regency of France from the Duke of Orleans, and the crown of Great Britain from King George. So dangerous is even one man when he is absolute in a powerful state, and possessed of courage and greatness of soul.

Gortz having thus spread through the courts of Muscovy and Spain the first sparks of that flame which he meant to kindle, went secretly to France

## HISTORY OF CHARLES XII.

and from thence to Holland, where he negotiated with many of the Pretender's adherents.

He informed himself more particularly of the force, number, and disposition of the malcontents in England, and also of the money they could furnish, and the troops they could raise. The malcontents asked only the assistance of ten thousand men, and represented the revolution as infallible with the assistance of these troops.

Count de Gillembourg, the Swedish ambassador in England, being instructed by Baron Gortz, had several conferences at London with the principal malcontents. He encouraged them, and promised them everything they could wish for: the Pretender's party went so far as to furnish several considerable sums of money, which Gortz received in Holland. He negotiated also about the purchase of some ships, and bought six in Brittany, with all kinds of arms.

He then sent several officers privately into France, and among others the Chevalier de Folard, who having made thirty campaigns in the French armies without any considerable addition to his fortune, had lately offered his services to the King of Sweden, not so much from any interested views, as from a desire to serve under a king who had so great a reputation. The Chevalier de Folard hoped also to prevail on him to adopt his new ideas on the art of war, he having studied that art all his life as a philosopher; and he has since given to the world his discoveries in his Commentary on Polybius. His ideas were approved of by Charles, wh

had made war himself in a manner entirely new, and was never guided by custom in anything; he destined the Chevalier de Folard for one of the instruments he was to make use of in his projected descent upon Scotland. That gentleman executed the secret orders of Baron de Gortz in France. A great number of French, and a still greater number of Irish officers engaged in this conspiracy of a new king, which was hatching at the same time in England, France, and Muscovy, and the branches of which were secretly extended from one end of Europe to the other.

These preparations were nothing to what Gortz intended to do; but it was a great thing to have begun. The most important point, and without which nothing could succeed, was to complete the peace between the Czar and Charles. There remained many difficulties to be removed. Baron Osterman, minister of state in Muscovy, refused at first to come into De Gortz's measures; he being as circumspect as the minister of Charles was enterprising. The one, slow and regular in his politics, was for suffering everything to ripen; while the other, of an impatient spirit, was for reaping the harvest as soon as the seed was sown. Osterman was afraid that the emperor, his master, dazzled with the splendor of this enterprise, would grant the Swedes so advantageous peace; he therefore delayed the conclusion of it by his obstacles and procrastinations.

Happily for Baron de Gortz, the Czar himself arrived in Holland at the beginning of the year

1717. His design was to go from thence into France: he had not yet seen that celebrated nation, which for more than a hundred years has been censured, envied, and imitated by all its neighbors. He wanted to gratify there his insatiable curiosity of seeing and learning everything, and at the same time to exercise his politics.

Gortz had two conferences with the emperor at the Hague; in which he made greater progress than he could have done in six months with the plenipotentiaries. Everything wore a favorable aspect. His mighty projects seemed covered by an impenetrable secrecy; and he flattered himself that Europe would only know them by their being carried into execution. In the meantime, he talked of nothing but of peace at the Hague, and openly declared that he would always consider the King of England as the peacemaker of the north; and he even pressed, in appearance, the holding of a congress at Brunswick, wherein the interests of Sweden and its enemies might be amicably decided.

The first who discovered these intrigues was the Duke of Orleans, Regent of France, who had spies in every part of Europe. Men of this description, whose profession it is to sell the secrets of their friends, who subsist by informations, and frequently even by calumnies, were so much increased in France under his government, that one half of the nation were become spies on the other. The Duke of Orleans, connected with the King of England by personal engagements, discovered to him the plot that was hatching against him.

At the same time the Dutch, who took umbrage at the behavior of Gortz, communicated their suspicions to the English minister. Gortz and Gillembourg were prosecuting their schemes with great vigor, when they were both arrested, the one at Deventer, in Guelderland, and the other at London.

Gillembourg, the Swedish ambassador, had violated the law of nations by conspiring against the king to whom he was delegated, and no scruple was entertained of violating the same law by arresting his person. But all the world was astonished to see the States-General, through an unheard-of complacency towards the King of England, imprison Baron de Gortz. They even appointed the Count de Welderen to examine him. This formality was only an aggravation of their insult, and, from its useless nature, turned out to their own confusion. Gortz asked the Count de Welderen if he knew him. "Yes, sir," replied the Dutchman. "Well, then," replied De Gortz, "if you do know me, you know also that I answer to nothing but what I please." The examination was scarcely pushed any farther. All the ambassadors, but particularly the Marquis de Monteleon, the Spanish ambassador, protested against the outrage offered to the persons of Gortz and Gillembourg. The Dutch were without excuse. They had not only violated a most sacred law by seizing the prime minister of the King of Sweden, who had formed no plots against them, but they acted directly against the principles of that liberty which had drawn so many foreigners into their country,

and which had been the foundation of all their greatness.

With regard to the King of England, he had committed no breach of justice in imprisoning his enemy. He published in his own vindication the letters of Baron de Gortz and Count Gillembourg, which were found among the papers of the latter. The King of Sweden was in Scania at the time when he received these printed letters, together with the news of his two ministers being imprisoned. He asked with a smile, "if they had printed his letters also?" He immediately gave orders for arresting the English resident at Stockholm, with all his family and domestics. He debarred the Dutch resident the court, and took care to have him strictly watched. Meanwhile he neither avowed nor disavowed the proceedings of De Gortz; being too proud to deny a scheme which he at once approved, and too wise to acknowledge a plot which had been stifled almost in its birth; he therefore maintained a disdainful silence towards England and Holland.

The Czar took a different course. As he was not named, but only obscurely hinted at in the papers of Gortz and Gillembourg, he wrote a long letter to the King of England, full of compliments on the discovery of the conspiracy, and assurance of a sincere friendship. King George received his protestations without believing them, and pretended to be deceived by them. A conspiracy formed by private men is annihilated the moment it is discovered; but a conspiracy formed by kings



only gains strength by its being known. The Czar arrived at Paris in the month of May in the same year. He did not totally employ himself in viewing the beauties of art and nature, in visiting the academies, the public libraries, the cabinets of the curious, and the royal palaces: he proposed a treaty to the Duke of Orleans, regent of France, the acceptation of which would have completed the grandeur of Muscovy. His design was to unite himself with the King of Sweden, who would yield to him several large provinces; to entirely deprive the Danes of the empire of the north in Germany, might one day cause himself to be elected emperor, and oppress its sovereigns. The more they were enraged, the faster did this great project of Baron de Gortz advance towards success. He negotiated, notwithstanding, with every one of the confederate princes for the better carrying on his secret intrigues; and the Czar continued amusing them all with various hopes. In the meantime Charles was in Norway, with his brother-in-law the Prince of Hesse, at the head of twenty thousand men; this province was defended only by eleven thousand men separated in different bodies, whom the king and the Prince of Hesse had put to the sword.

Charles advanced as far as Christiania, the capital of this kingdom; and in this corner of the globe fortune again began to smile on him: but he never took sufficient precautions to provide for the subsistence of his troops. A Danish fleet and

Czar was ready to declare against his old ally Augustus, and to espouse the cause of Charles, his mortal enemy; while France, to oblige the Germans and the English, was going to make war upon the grandson of Louis XIV., after having so long supported him against these very enemies, at the expense of so much blood and treasure. All that the Czar obtained by indirect measures was the prevailing upon the Regent to interpose his good offices to procure the freedom of Gortz and Gillembourg. He returned to his own dominions about the end of June, after having shown the French the uncommon sight of an emperor travelling for instruction; but the generality of that people only took notice of his rude unpolished manners, the result of his bad education; while the legislator, the hero, and the creator of a new nation, entirely escaped their observation.

What the Czar sought for in the Duke of Orleans, he soon found in Cardinal Alberoni, now become all-powerful in Spain. Alberoni wished for nothing so much as the restoration of *the Pretender*; not only as minister of Spain (a country which had been so ill treated by the English), but as a personal enemy to the Duke of Orleans, who was leagued with England against Spain; and lastly, as a priest of that church for the sake of which the Pretender's father had so imprudently lost his crown.

The Duke of Ormond, as much beloved in England as the Duke of Marlborough was admired, had left his country on the accession of King

George, and had at that time retired to Madrid. He went from thence, invested with full powers by the King of Spain and the Pretender, together with one Jerningham, another native of England, a man of fine address and an enterprising spirit, to meet the Czar in his way to Mittau in Courland. He demanded the Princess Anna Petrowna, the Czar's daughter, in marriage for the son of James II.,\* hoping that this alliance would more strongly attach the Czar to the interests of that unhappy prince. But this proposal, instead of forwarding, had nearly retarded for a time the progress of the negotiations. Baron de Gortz, among his other projects, had long destined this princess for the Duke of Holstein, to whom, in effect, she was soon after married. As soon as he was informed of the Duke of Ormond's proposal, he became jealous of its success, and applied every art to set it aside. He, as well as Count Gillembourg, was set at liberty in the month of August; the King of Sweden not even deigning to make the least excuse to the King of England, nor to show the slightest disapprobation of his minister's conduct.

At the same time the English resident and all his family were released at Stockholm, where they had

\* The Cardinal Alberoni confirms the truth of all these particulars in a letter of thanks to the author. M. Norberg, whose ignorance of the affairs of Europe can only be equalled by the poverty of his genius, alleges that the Duke of Ormond did not quit England upon the accession of George I., but immediately after the death of Queen Anne; as if George I. had not been the immediate successor of that queen.

been treated with much more severity than Gillembourg had been at London.

Gortz, having obtained his freedom, behaved like an implacable enemy, having the spirit of revenge joined to the powerful motives by which he had been formerly actuated. He posted to the Czar, and by his artful insinuations obtained a greater ascendancy over him than ever. He assured him directly that in less than three months he would, in conjunction with a single plenipotentiary from Russia, remove every obstacle that retarded the conclusion of a peace with Sweden; and, taking a map in his hand, which had been drawn by the Czar himself, he drew a line from Wibourg all the way to the Frozen sea, running along the lake Ladoga, and undertook to persuade his master to give up all the country lying to the eastward of that line, as well as Carelia, Ingria, and Livonia. After that he threw out propositions for a marriage between his daughter and the Duke of Holstein, flattering the Czar that the duke might be prevailed upon to yield up his dominions for an equivalent, by which means they would become a part of the empire, and showing him afar off the imperial crown, whether it were to be worn by himself or by one of his descendants. He thus flattered the ambitious views of the Russian monarch, and prevented the *Pretender* from marrying the Russian princess, while he opened to him the road into England, and accomplished all his own projects at once.

The Czar named the isle of Aland for the hold-

ferences between Osterman, his minister of state, and Baron de Gortz. The Duke of Ormond was desired to return to Spain, that the Czar might not give too great cause of offence to the English, to whom he had no intention of giving umbrage till he should be ready to make the projected invasion. Jerningham, the Duke's confidant, who was properly instructed, was allowed to stay at St. Petersburg, where he lived with such precaution that he never went abroad but during night, nor ever conversed with any of the Czar's ministers, except in the disguise of a peasant or Tartar.

As soon as the Duke of Ormond departed, the Czar acquainted the King of England with the high compliment he had paid him in dismissing the greatest man in the Pretender's faction; and Baron de Gortz, full of hope, returned to Sweden.

He found his master at the head of 35,000 regular troops, and all the coasts lined with the militia. The king wanted nothing but money; credit, as well at home as abroad, being entirely exhausted. France, which had furnished him with some supplies during the last years of Louis XIV., refused to contribute any more under the regency of the Duke of Orleans, who was governed by quite contrary maxims. Spain promised him some remittances; but was not as yet able to furnish much. De Gortz at this time put into execution, in its full extent, a scheme which he formerly tried before his journey to France and Holland. This was to give to copper the value of silver, so that a piece of copper whose intrinsic value was only a halfpenny,

should, when stamped with the king's mark, pass for forty pence; in the same manner as the governors of besieged towns frequently pay the soldiers and citizens in leather money, in hopes of being one day able to reimburse them in real coin. This fictitious kind of money, invented by necessity, and to which nothing can give a durable credit but the good faith of a government, resembles bills of exchange, the imaginary value of which may easily exceed the real funds of a state.

These resources are of great use in a free country: they have sometimes saved a republic, but almost certainly ruin a monarchy; for as soon as the people's confidence is broken, the minister is reduced to break his faith; the ideal coin is multiplied to excess, and the specie is buried by those who possess it; and the whole machine is destroyed with a confusion which is often accompanied by the greatest disasters. This was what happened to the kingdom of Sweden.

Baron de Gortz at first issued his new coin with discretion; but, by the rapidity of the movement which he could no longer control, he was in a little time hurried beyond the limits which he had originally prescribed. All kinds of merchandise and provisions having risen to an immoderate price, he was obliged to increase the quantity of the copper coin. But the more it was increased, the less was its value: at last Sweden, overrun by this false money, set up a general cry against De Gortz. The people, who had always beheld their sovereign with veneration, could not find in their hearts to

hate him, and therefore made the weight of their resentment fall on a minister, who, as he was a foreigner and chief director of the finances, was doubly certain of the public hatred.

A tax which he wanted to lay on the clergy rendered him totally detestable to the nation. The priests, too, who often join their own cause to that of heaven, publicly pronounced him an atheist, because he demanded their money. Some of the new coin being stamped with the figures of the heathen gods, they took this occasion to call those pieces *les Dieux du Baron des Gortz*.

To this public hatred was added the jealousy of the ministers, who were the more implacable as he was at that time beyond their power. The king's sister and the prince her husband feared him as a man attached by his birth to the Duke of Holstein, and who might one day be able to place the crown of Sweden on his head. He had gained no one's affections in the kingdom but Charles's; yet this general aversion served only to confirm the friendship of the king, whose opinions were always strengthened by contradictions. He now placed a confidence in the Baron bordering on submission; he gave him an absolute power in the interior government of the kingdom; and committed to his care, without the least reserve, whatever related to the negotiations with the Czar, recommending to him, above all things, to hasten the conferences that were to be held in the isle of Aland.

In effect, Gortz had no sooner finished the arrangement of the finances at Stockholm, which

demanding his presence, than he set out to conclude with the Czar's minister, the grand scheme he had projected.

The following are the preliminary conditions of that alliance, which was wholly to have changed the face of affairs in Europe; they were found among De Gortz's papers after his death:

The Czar was to keep the whole of Livonia, and part of Ingria and Carelia, and to restore the rest to Sweden: he was to join Charles XII. in the design to re-establish Stanislaus on the throne of Poland, and was to engage to enter that country with eighty thousand Russians to dethrone Augustus, the very king in whose defence he had waged a war of ten years' continuance. He was also to furnish the King of Sweden with a sufficient number of ships to transport ten thousand Swedes to England, and thirty thousand to Germany. The united forces of Peter and Charles were to attack the King of England in his states of Hanover, and particularly in Bremen and Verden: the same troops would have served to restore the Duke of Holstein, and compelled the King of Prussia to accept a treaty by which he would have been deprived of part of those territories which he had formerly taken.

From this time Charles assumed an air as lofty as if his victorious troops (reinforced by those of the Czar) had already executed everything they intended. He haughtily demanded of the Emperor of Germany to conclude the treaty of Altranstad. The court of Vienna scarcely deigned to give an



answer to the proposal of a prince from whom she thought there was nothing to fear.

The King of Poland did not possess so much confidence; he saw the clouds gathering on every side. The Polish nobility had formed a confederacy against him; and, since his restoration, he had continually been engaged either in wars or treaties with his subjects. The Czar, a dangerous mediator, had a hundred ships near Dantzic, and forty thousand men on the frontiers of Poland. All the north was filled with jealousy and apprehension. Fleming, the most distrustful of men, and himself the most to be distrusted by the neighboring powers, was the first who suspected the designs of the Czar and the King of Sweden in favor of Stanislaus. He determined therefore to have him seized in the duchy of Deux-Ponts, as James Sobiesky had formerly been in Silesia. A Frenchman (one of those restless and enterprising spirits who wander into foreign parts to try their fortunes) had lately brought a small number of his countrymen, bold and daring like himself, into the service of the King of Poland. He communicated a project to Fleming, by which he engaged, with thirty French officers, to seize Stanislaus in his own palace, and carry him a prisoner to Dresden. The project was approved. Such enterprises were then very common. Some of those fellows, who are called *bravoës* in Italy, had performed similar acts in the Milanese during the last war between France and Germany. After that time several French refugees in Holland had ventured to penetrate as far as Versailles, in order

to carry off the Dauphin; and had actually seized the person of the first equerry, almost under the windows of the castle where Louis XIV. resided.

Saissan prepared his men and relays of post-horses, in order to seize and carry off Stanislaus. The enterprise was discovered the night before it was to have been carried into execution. Several of them made their escape, and the rest were taken prisoners. They had no right to expect to be treated as prisoners of war, but rather as banditti. Stanislaus, however, instead of punishing them, contented himself with reproaching them with their baseness, and even that he did in terms replete with humanity; he even gave them money to conduct them back to Poland, and by this generous behavior plainly showed that his rival Augustus had but too much reason to fear him.\*

In the meantime Charles departed a second time for the conquest of Norway, in the month of October, 1718. He had taken all his measures so well, that he hoped in six months' time to make himself master of that kingdom. He rather chose to go and conquer rocks amidst ice and snow, in the depth of winter (which kills the animals even in Sweden, where the air is less cold), than to retake his beautiful provinces in Germany from the hands of his enemies. These he expected he should soon be able to recover, in consequence of his alliance

\* Here M. Norberg accuses the author of want of respect to crowned heads; as if this faithful account contained in it anything injurious, or as if we were obliged to relate anything but truth of departed kings.

## CONCLUSION.

with the Czar ; and his vanity, besides, was more flattered by ravishing a kingdom from his victorious enemy.

At the mouth of the river Tistendall, near the channel of Denmark, and between the towns of Bahus and Anslo, stands Frederickshall, a place of great strength and importance, and considered as the key of the kingdom. Charles formed the siege of this place in the month of December. The soldiers, benumbed with cold, could scarcely turn up the earth, which was so much hardened by the frost, that it was almost as difficult to pierce it as if they had been opening trenches in a rock ; yet the Swedes could not be disheartened, while they saw their king at their head, who partook of all their fatigues. Charles had never before undergone so many hardships. His constitution, hardened by eighteen years of severe labors, was fortified to such a degree, that he slept in the open field in Norway, in the midst of winter, either on a truss of straw or a plank, covered only with a cloak, without the least prejudice to his health.

Several of the soldiers dropped down dead at their posts, and the rest were almost frozen to death ; yet, as they saw their king suffering like themselves, they did not dare to make the least complaint. Having heard, some time before this expedition, of a certain woman in Scania, called Joan Dotter, who had lived for several months without taking any other nourishment than water, he, who had studied all his life to support the most extreme rigors that human nature could bear,

resolved to try how long he could fast without being worn out. He passed five whole days without either eating or drinking; and, on the morning of the sixth, rode two leagues, and then alighted at the tent of the Prince of Hesse, his brother-in-law, where he ate heartily, without feeling the least inconvenience from his abstinence of five days, or from the plentiful meal which immediately succeeded.\*

With this body of iron, governed by a soul so enterprising and inflexible in every situation he was reduced to, he could not fail to be formidable to all his neighbors.

On the 11th of December, being St. Andrew's Day, he went at nine in the evening to visit the trenches; and not finding the parallel so far advanced as he expected, appeared very much displeased. M. Megret, a French engineer, who conducted the siege, assured him that the place could be taken in eight days. "We shall see," said the king, and went on with the engineer to survey the works. He stopped at a place where a branch of the trenches formed an angle with the parallel; and kneeling on the inner talus, and resting his elbow on the parapet, continued in that posture for some time, to view the men who were carrying on the trenches by star-light.

The least circumstances become important when they relate to the death of such a man as Charles

\* Norberg pretends that it was to cure a pain in his breast that Charles tried this strange abstinence. Confessor Norberg is surely a bad physician.

**XII.** I must therefore say, that the whole of the conversation reported by so many writers to have passed between the king and Megret the engineer, is absolutely false. This is what I know to be the real truth of the matter.

Almost half of the king's body was exposed to a battery of cannon, pointed directly against the angle where he was. There was no one near his person at this time but two Frenchmen; one of whom was M. Siquier, his aide-de-camp, a man of courage and morality, who had entered into his service in Turkey, and who was particularly attached to the Prince of Hesse and the other was his engineer. The cannon fired upon them, but the king, being the least covered by the parapet, was the most exposed. At some distance behind them was Count Schwerin, who commanded in the trenches. Count Posse, a captain of the guards, and an aide-de-camp, named Kulbert, were receiving orders from him. Siquier and Megret saw the king the moment he fell, which he did upon the parapet, with a deep sigh. They immediately ran to him: he was already dead. A ball of half-a-pound weight had struck him on the right temple, and made a hole sufficient to receive three fingers at once; his head was reclined on the parapet, his left eye beat in, and the right one entirely out of its socket. The instant of his wound had been that of his death; but he had had the force, while expiring in so sudden a manner, to place, by a natural movement, his hand upon the hilt of his sword, and he remained in that attitude. At the

sight of this spectacle, Megret, a man of a peculiar and callous disposition, said nothing but these words, "There! the play is over; let us be gone." Siquier ran immediately to inform Count Schwerin. They all agreed to conceal the news of his death from the soldiers till they could acquaint the Prince of Hesse with it. They wrapped up the body in a grey cloak. Siquier put his hat and wig on the king's head; and in this condition they carried Charles, under the name of one Captain Carlsberg, through the midst of his troops, who saw their dead king pass them, without ever dreaming that it was he.

The Prince of Hesse instantly gave orders that no one should go out of the camp, and that all the passes to Sweden should be strictly guarded, that he might have time to take the necessary measures for placing the crown on his wife's head, and excluding the Duke of Holstein, who might lay claim to it.

#### CHARLES'S CHARACTER SUMMED UP.

Thus fell Charles XII., King of Sweden, at the age of thirty-six years and a half, after having experienced whatever is most brilliant in prosperity, and all that is most poignant in adversity, without having been enervated by the one, or having wavered, though but for a moment, with the other. Almost all his actions, even those of his private life, bordered on the marvellous. He is perhaps the only one of all mankind, and hitherto the only one among kings, who has lived without a

single frailty. He carried all the virtues of heroes to an excess at which they are as dangerous as their opposite vices. His resolution, hardened into obstinacy, occasioned his misfortunes in the Ukraine, and detained him five years in Turkey: his liberality, degenerating into profusion, ruined Sweden; his courage, extending even to rashness, was the cause of his death; his justice has sometimes extended to cruelty; and during the last years of his reign, the means he employed to support his authority differed little from tyranny. His great qualities, any one of which would have been sufficient to have immortalized another prince, proved the misfortune of his country. He never was the aggressor; yet, in taking vengeance, he was more implacable than prudent. He was the first man who ever aspired to the title of conqueror, without the least desire of enlarging his own dominions; and whose only end in subduing kingdoms, was to have the pleasure of giving them away. His passion for glory, for war, and revenge, prevented him from being a good politician; a quality without which the world had never before seen any one a conqueror. Before a battle, and after a victory, he was modest and humble; and after a defeat, firm and undaunted; inflexible towards others as well as towards himself, rating at nothing the fatigues and lives of his subjects any more than his own; rather an extraordinary than a great man, and more worthy to be admired than imitated. His life ought to be a lesson to kings,

how much a pacific and happy government is preferable to so much glory.

Charles XII. was of a tall stature, with a noble air; he had a fine forehead, large blue eyes full of sweetness, and a handsome nose; but the lower part of his face was disagreeable, and too often disfigured by a frequent laugh, at which time he scarce opened his lips; and he had scarce any beard or hair. He spoke very little, and frequently only answered people with that laugh which was habitual to him. With the inflexible obstinacy of his temper, he always retained that timidity which goes by the name of false modesty. He would have been embarrassed in a conversation, because, having given up his time entirely to war and action, he had no knowledge of society. Till the time of his residence among the Turks, which furnished him with a good deal of leisure, he had read nothing but Cæsar's Commentaries and the History of Alexander; yet he had written some reflections on the art of war, and particularly on his own campaigns from 1700 to 1709. This he owned to the Chevalier de Folard, but said that the manuscript had been lost in the unfortunate battle of Pultowa. Some people would describe Charles as a good mathematician: he possessed, no doubt, a great degree of penetration, but the arguments they make use of to prove his knowledge in mathematics, are by no means conclusive: he wanted to alter the method of counting by tens, and proposed to substitute in its place the number 64, because that



number contains both a cube and a square, and being divided by two, is reducible to a unit. This only proves that he delighted in everything extraordinary and difficult.

With regard to his religion, though the sentiments of a prince ought to have no influence on other men, and though the opinion of a monarch so illiterate as Charles can be of little consequence in these matters, yet it is necessary to gratify, in this as well as in every other particular, the curiosity of mankind, who are anxious to know whatever relates to this prince. I am informed by the gentleman who furnished me with the greatest part of the materials which compose this history, that Charles was a serious Lutheran till the year 1707. He then happened to see at Leipsic the famous philosopher Mr. Leibnitz, who thought and spoke freely, and had already instilled his sentiments into more princes than one. I cannot believe, as it is reported, that Charles conceived an indifference for Lutheranism from the conversation of this philosopher, who never had the opportunity of talking with him above a quarter of an hour. But M. Fabricius, who lived with him in great familiarity for seven years successively, told me that Charles had seen such an infinite variety of religions during his residence among the Turks, that his indifference became increased. La Mottraye, in his voyages, confirms this idea. The same too is the opinion of the Count de Croissy, who has several times told me that of all his old principles Charles retained

none but that of absolute predestination; a doctrine that favored his courage and justified his temerity. The Czar held the same opinion with regard to fate and religion; but talked of these subjects more frequently, as indeed he did of everything else with his favorites, with much familiarity; for he had the advantage over Charles both in the study of philosophy and the gift of eloquence.

Here I cannot help taking notice of a calumny that is too often raised at the death of princes by the malicious, and too readily believed by the credulous, that their death is always owing to poison or assassination. A report had spread through Germany that M. Siquier himself had killed the King of Sweden. That brave officer was long grieved at this injurious aspersion; and one day talking to me on the subject, used the following expression: "I might have killed the King of Sweden, but such was my respect for that hero, that, had I conceived the thought, I could not have had the courage to carry it into execution."

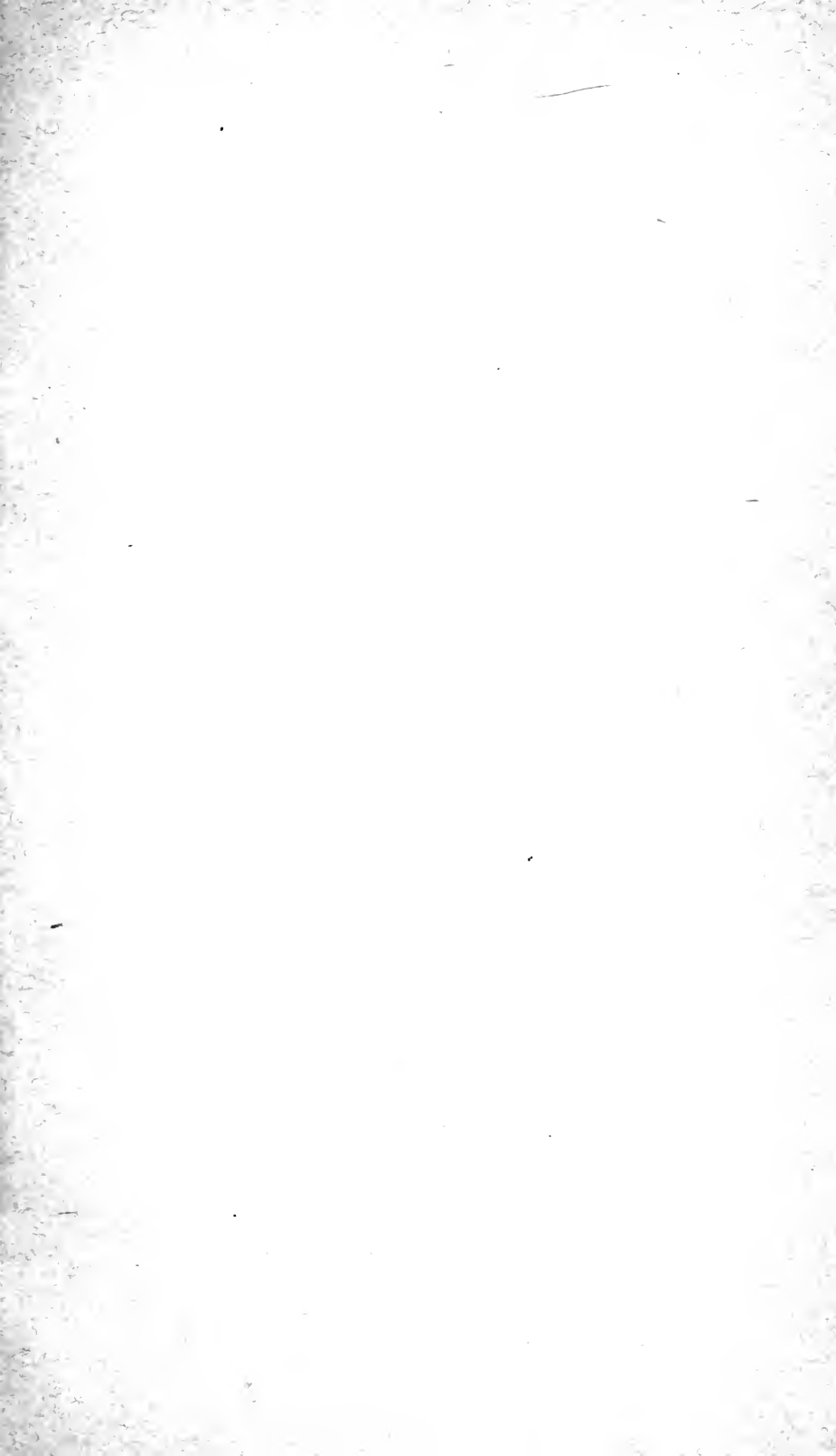
I know very well that Siquier himself gave occasion for this heavy accusation, which, even to this day, is believed by a part of Sweden: he told me, that during a raging fever at Stockholm, he had cried out that he had killed the King of Sweden; and that in the height of his frenzy he even opened the window, and publicly begged pardon for the regicide. When he was acquainted, in the course of his recovery, with what he had said in his illness, he was ready to die with grief. This anecdote

r did not choose to reveal during his lifetime. I saw him a little time before his death, and I think I can safely affirm that, so far from killing Charles XII., he would have suffered a thousand deaths could he have saved his life. Had he been guilty of such a crime, it must have been to have served some prince, who, no doubt, would have liberally rewarded him; but he died in France extremely poor, and even stood in need of assistance from myself. If these reasons are not sufficient, let it be considered that the ball by which Charles fell could not enter into a pistol, and that Siquier could not have executed this detestable crime but with a pistol concealed under his clothes.

After the death of the king, the siege of Frederickshall was raised: everything was changed in the government. The Swedes, more oppressed than flattered by the glory of their prince, lost no time in concluding a peace with their enemies, and suppressing that absolute power which Baron de Gortz had made them feel to excess. The states freely elected the sister of Charles XII. for their queen, and obliged her, by a solemn act, to renounce all hereditary right to the Crown, in order that she should only hold it by the suffrages of the nation. She promised with reiterated oaths that she would never attempt to restore arbitrary authority, and at last sacrificed the love of royalty to conjugal affection, yielded the crown to her husband, and engaged the estates to elect that prince, who mounted the throne on the same conditions as herself.

The Baron de Gortz, being seized instantly after the death of Charles, was condemned by the senate of Stockholm to have his head cut off at the foot of the gallows of the town ; an example of revenge, perhaps, rather than of justice ; and a cruel insult to the memory of a king whom Sweden still admires.

**THE END.**













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